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MAY 2, 2011

THE NEW YORKER



"I'm a storyteller, and Halifax feeds that."

Chaz Thorne - Nova Scotian filmmaker



Halifax Citadel National Historic Site

Chaz's Nova Scotia



I am a filmmaker in Halifax. There is a real duality here that constantly adds to the creative process. On one hand, there's a strong history, depth and age to the city. Then at the same time we

have a vibrant youthful energy. Contemporary architecture shares the same block with buildings that are centuries old. Modern theatre lives across the street from traditional pub fare. Plus there's a quiet sophistication, enhanced by the charm and friendliness of the people. It makes for a creative vibe that always inspires me. You'll feel it too.

A weekend in my city

I love to start my weekend with a coffee from one of the **coffee shops downtown** and then a walk through the Public Gardens. After that, I like to stop by the **Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market** and pick up some local cheese, organic produce, fresh baked bread and croissants. Almost every weekend, I meet up with some friends for dinner downtown and a concert or a play.



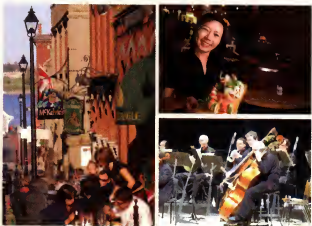
My must-do list

- Take some time to walk around the Public Gardens and through Point Pleasant Park
- Spend some time wandering around the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and take in a play at Neptune Theatre
- Explore Pier 21, Canada's Immigration Museum. Maybe you'll find a long-lost ancestor
- Get an order of fish & chips to go and enjoy it on a bench with a view of the waterfront

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C. Brown

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THE NEW YORKER

MAY 2, 2011

6 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

21 THE TALK OF THE TOWN

*Hendrik Hertzberg on Donald Trump;
James Surowiecki on the cost of Medicare.*

- Lauren Collins 26 LETTER FROM BRITAIN
Holy Matrimony!
Here comes the royal wedding.
- Dave Hanson 32 SHOUTS & MURMURS
New App on the Kindle 2Go
- Rivka Galchen 34 ANNALS OF SCIENCE
Dream Machine
Inside the world of quantum computing.
- Ryan Lizza 44 THE POLITICAL SCENE
The Consequentialist
Barack Obama's shifting foreign policy.
- Evan Ratliff 56 A REPORTER AT LARGE
The Mark
The F.B.I. and its informants.
- Sam Lipsyte 66 FICTION
"Deniers"

THE CRITICS

- Sasha Frere-Jones 76 POP MUSIC
Merrill Garbus's tUnE-yArDs.
- 80 BOOKS
Briefly Noted
Gandhi's successes and failures.
- Pankaj Mishra 80
Peter Schjeldahl 84 THE ART WORLD
"Rooms with a View," at the Met.
- Hilton Als 86 THE THEATRE
"Sleep No More."
- Anthony Lane 88 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"Cave of Forgotten Dreams," "The Arbor."

POEMS

- Bob Hicok 40 "Cultural Studies"
- Adam Zagajewski 68 "In Valleys"
- Meredith Root-Bernstein 82 "Dismemberment"

COVER "Entourage," by Barry Blitt DRAWINGS Charles Barsotti, Michael Maslin, Drew Dernavich, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Mick Stevens, Pat Byrnes, P. C. Vey, Robert Leighton, Lee Lorenz, William Haefeli, Ward Sutton, Zachary Kanin, Barbara Smaller SPOTS Emmanuel Pierre

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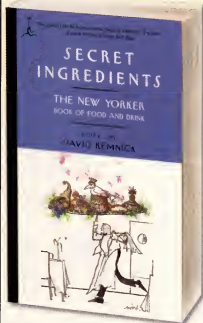
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WOODY ALLEN on dieting the
Dostoyevsky way
ADAM GOPNIK on the crisis in
French cooking
M.E.K. FISHER on the trouble
with tripe
BILL BUFORD on oysters

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CONTRIBUTORS

Lauren Collins ("Holy Matrimony!," p. 26) is a *New Yorker* staff writer based in London.

Hendrik Hertzberg (Comment, p. 21) writes about politics and policy, and has a blog on newyorker.com.

Rolf Potts (The Talk of the Town, p. 22) has published two books, "Vagabonding" and "Marco Polo Didn't Go There."

Dave Hanson (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 32) is currently a writer for "Lopez Tonight." He has also written for "Late Show with David Letterman," "MADtv," and the "Tonight Show with Jay Leno."

Rivka Galchen ("Dream Machine," p. 34) won a 2010 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing for "Atmospheric Disturbances," her debut novel.

Bob Hicok (Poem, p. 40) is the author of "This Clumsy Living," a book of poems, which won a Bobbitt Prize from the Library of Congress.

Barry Blitt (Cover) created the illustrations for "The Adventures of Mark Twain by Huckleberry Finn," which was published in March.

Ryan Lizza ("The Consequentialist," p. 44), a staff writer, has been the magazine's Washington correspondent since 2007.

Evan Ratliff ("The Mark," p. 56) is the founding editor of *The Atavist*, a digital publication.

Sam Lipsyte (Fiction, p. 66), who teaches fiction at Columbia, is the author of "Venus Drive," a short-story collection, and three novels, including "The Ask."

Sasha Frere-Jones (Pop Music, p. 76) is writing a book entitled "Paler," based on his *New Yorker* essay "A Paler Shade of White," which appeared in October, 2007.

Pankaj Mishra (Books, p. 80) has published several books, including "Temp-tations of the West: How to Be Modern in India, Pakistan, Tibet, and Beyond," which is available in paperback.

Meredith Root-Bernstein (Poem, p. 82) lives in Santiago, Chile, and is currently working on a Ph.D. in ecology.

Peter Schjeldahl (The Art World, p. 84), the magazine's art critic since 1998, is the author of "Let's See: Writings on Art from *The New Yorker*."

THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM

Ask the Author: Live chats with *Hendrik Hertzberg* on Donald Trump and *Ryan Lizza* on Obama's foreign policy. / Audio: *Elizabeth Kolbert*, *Eric Konigsberg*, and *Raffi Khatchadourian* on oil after the BP spill; *Lauren Collins* and *Blake Eskin* on the British royal wedding; *Sam Lipsyte* reads a Thomas McGuane story. / DVD of the Week: *Richard Brody* on "The Great Dictator." / Blogs: *Amy Davidson*'s Close Read; *Wendell Steavenson* in Cairo; *Evan Osnos* in China; *Rebecca Mead* on the royal wedding. / Animated cartoons, the caption contest, and cover jigsaws. / Our complete archive, back to 1925.



THE MAIL

TASTEMAKERS

John Lanchester suggests that "modernist cuisine" constitutes a break from the past (*A Critic at Large*, March 21st). But it seems to me that it is actually a continuation of French haute cuisine, and that the break is between that tradition, which seeks to transform ingredients into something greater than the sum of its parts, and another European culinary tradition, represented by Tuscan cuisine, which seeks to marry excellent ingredients in a union that is precisely the sum of its parts. The latter tradition is the one that Alice Waters follows with obvious success but that the French deride as mere shopping, not cuisine. The modernist version of haute cuisine that Lanchester describes is a technologically advanced version of the "Larousse Gastronomique."

*Shan Lewton
Boston, Mass.*

MATCH POINT

Adam Gopnik, along with other reviewers, misses one important element in writing about the performance of Watson, the I.B.M. computer that competed with two humans on "Jeopardy" (Books, April 4th). Watson had an advantage, in that he was able to push the signal button much faster, and so was able to respond to almost every answer. Had I.B.M. programmed a very short delay into the signal, comparable to the time it takes a human to respond, my guess is that Watson could have been beaten, but then I.B.M. would have had egg all over its face.

*Robert Spies
Los Angeles, Calif.*

As a professional poker player and instructor who relies heavily on computer analysis to improve my play and that of my students, I was fascinated by Gopnik's comparison of poker with chess. Although Gopnik is correct in saying that computers are no match for the poker equivalent of grand masters, successful poker is not, as he suggests, a matter of empathy—of imagining the mental state

of an opponent—but, rather, of strategy: the ability to take all the factors in a situation into account. Chess offers a large but finite number of factors, which computers can successfully analyze. In poker, computers can defeat humans only in heads-up limit games, where both the number of opponents and the range of betting options are limited. But the possible combinations quickly become enormous: if you play Texas hold 'em with nine players, for example, you have more than six hundred quintillion possible combinations. What the expert poker player brings to the game is deductive reasoning, which allows him to evaluate this complexity.

*Nick Brancato
Jersey City, N.J.*

A TORN LAND

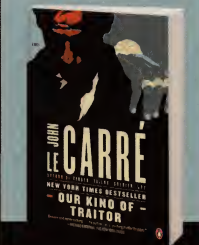
David Grann vividly illustrates the appalling violence and corruption in Guatemala today ("A Murder Foretold," April 4th). He doesn't, however, fully explore the impact of this violence and corruption on the country's indigenous population. Mayan communities were by and large the victims of the brutal violence that engulfed the country for more than three decades. Fifteen years after the signing of the peace accords, the Mayans' subjugation is still evident in their extreme poverty, inadequate access to health care, lack of indigenous political representation, and high rates of alcoholism, gang violence, domestic violence, and kidnapping. The continued impunity of government and military officials, the government's efforts to protect controversial military war documents, and the lack of proper burials for war victims are as corrupting to Guatemala's health as the machinations Grann exposes.

*Emily Behar
New York City*

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S • M • T • W • T • F • S

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	27	28	29	30

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE GOOD MANNERS

The writer David Ives and the director Walter Bobbie last collaborated on Classic Stage Company's "Venus in Fur"; they reunite with "The School for Lies," which is loosely based on Molière's "The Misanthrope." Mamie Gummer and Hamish Linklater lead the cast. (See page 8.)

NIGHT LIFE TIMELY RETURN

The Brooklyn-born singer-songwriter Garland Jeffreys, whose mid-seventies

anthem "Wild in the Streets" became an FM-radio staple following the city's financial crisis, is back. His first album in thirteen years, the tough-minded "The King of In Between," comes out in June, and Jeffreys headlines the Highline Ballroom with a full band this week. (See page 9.)

ART IN THE BEGINNING

A century ago, the heiress and artist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney began acquiring works by such great American modernists as Charles Sheeler, Edward Hopper, and Georgia

O'Keeffe, paving the way for the Whitney Museum, which opened in 1931. In the exhibition "Breaking Ground: The Whitney's Founding Collection," the museum revisits its roots. (See page 10.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC BANKABLE

Though the board of the Philadelphia Orchestra has decided to declare bankruptcy, the ensemble remains its magnificent self. At Carnegie Hall, Charles Dutoit, its chief conductor, leads its musicians in Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex" and "Apollon Musagète." (See page 13.)

MOVIES AGAINST THE WIND

Despite China's recent crackdown on political expression, the independent cinema continues to thrive there. The Museum of the Moving Image presents some prime new examples, including "Thomas Mao," about an American painter's adventures in Mongolia, and "Single Man," a sex comedy about four elderly farmers, all played by nonprofessional actors. (See page 17.)

Amadou and Mariam, at the Cooper Square Hotel. Photograph by Jessica Dimmock.

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THE THEATRE OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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BABY IT'S YOU!

A new musical, based on the story of the pioneering music mogul Florence Greenberg, who discovered the Shirelles and created Scepter Records. With a book by Floyd Mutrux and Colin Escott; directed by Mutrux and Sheldon Epps. Beth Leavel stars. Opens April 27. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

BE A GOOD LITTLE WIDOW

Stephen Brackett directs Bekah Brunstetter's play, about a new widow who must deal with her mother-in-law as she grieves for her husband. In previews. Opens May 2. (Ars Nova, 511 W. 54th St. 212-352-3101.)

BY THE WAY, MEET VERA STARK

The world premiere of a new play by Lynn Nottage ("Ruined"), about an African-American maid turned actress who is cast in the same Southern-epic film as her white movie-star boss. Sanaa Lathan, Stephanie J. Block, Daniel Breaker, and Karen Olivo star. Jo Bonney directs. In previews. (Second Stage, 305 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

CARSON MCCULLERS TALKS ABOUT LOVE

Suzanne Vega wrote and stars in this play, in which McCullers sings and ruminates on love, life, and art. Kay Matschullat directs. In previews. (Rattlestick, 224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444.)

FUTURE ANXIETY

Jim Simpson directs a new play by Laurel Haines, about people trying to survive when life on Earth is no longer viable. In previews. Opens April 28. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

THE INTELLIGENT HOMOSEXUAL'S GUIDE TO CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM WITH A KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES

Michael Greif directs the New York premiere of a play by Tony Kushner, about an Italian-American longshoreman from Brooklyn whose Communist leanings affect his entire family. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

KING LEAR

Michael Grandage directs the Shakespeare tragedy, presented by Donmar Warehouse and BAM. Derek Jacobi stars. Previews begin April 28. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 866-636-4100.)

LOCKER 41738

The performance collective New York Neo-Futurists stages the story of an exploration of two storage lockers bought at auction. Joey Rizzolo and Christopher Borg wrote and perform; Justin Tolley directs. Previews begin April 28. Opens May 3. (The Monkey, 37 W. 26th St. 866-811-4111.)

A MINISTER'S WIFE

Lincoln Center Theatre presents the New York premiere of a new musical based on George Bernard Shaw's "Candida," with a book by Austin Pendleton, music by Joshua Schmidt, and lyrics by Jan Tranen. Michael Halberstam conceived and directs. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

MURROW'S BOYS

Jim Niesen directs a play by Irontale Ensemble, about Edward R. Murrow and the group of journalists with whom he reported from London during the Second World War. In previews. (Irontale Center, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. 866-811-4111.)

THE NORMAL HEART

Joel Grey directs Ellen Barkin (in her Broadway debut), John Benjamin Hickey, Joe Mantello, Jim Parsons, and Lee Pace in Larry Kramer's 1985 play, about the AIDS crisis. Opens April 27. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE PEOPLE IN THE PICTURE

Donna Murphy stars in a new musical, presented by Roundabout Theatre Company, with a book and lyrics by Iris Rainer Dart ("Beaches") and music by Mike Stoller and Artie Butler. Leonard Foglia directs the tale of three generations, centered on a New York bubble who was a star of the Yiddish theatre in prewar Poland. In previews. Opens April 28. (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

THE SCHOOL FOR LIES

Classic Stage Company reunites the writer David Ives and the director Walter Bobbie ("Venus in Fur") for

So, while much of the impact of this genuine political theatre might be lost in translation, it's still worth seeing. (74 E. 4th St. 212-475-7710.)

BORN BAD

Powerful and often destructive women are at the heart of this hour-long work by the young black British playwright Debbie Tucker Green, directed by Leah C. Gardner. Green has created a piece about family divisions and dysfunction, in which plot is less important than what a character might say and how she says it. Working with a West Indian vernacular, Green, unlike a number of black playwrights, doesn't temper or interpret her experience of black life for white audiences. Instead, she lets the colorless ooze of her characters' unhappiness drip slowly over us. Although the play says in the middle, the production benefits from a number of talented actors, particularly Quincy Tyler Bernstine, as Sister No. 1, and Elaine Graham, as Mum, from whose respective reserves of sarcasm and stoicism a pervasive misogyny blossoms. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/25/11.) (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 212-352-3101.)

JERUSALEM

Mark Rylance reprises his role as a former motorcycle daredevil living in rural southwest England, in a new play by Jez Butterworth that premiered at the Royal Court. Mackenzie Crook and John Gallagher, Jr., also star; Ian Rickson directs. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE MOTHERF*CKER WITH THE HAT

In this elegiac, exhilarating, hundred-minute intermissionless work, which is surely handled by the director Anna D. Shapiro, Jackie and Veronica, as played by the astonishing Bobby Cannavale and Elizabeth Rodriguez, are two hopeful losers who want to have the kind of intimacy they've seen in movies, but for whom it's always just out of reach. Jackie, out on parole, is newly sober, but Veronica has been unfaithful. As Jackie's world unravels, he turns to his A.A. sponsor, the homily-spewing, vegetable-juice-drinking Ralph D. (Chris Rock, in his Broadway debut), and his wise, sarcastic cousin, Julio (the phenomenal Yul Vázquez), who has Jackie's back but not unconditionally. The interplay of Jackie and Veronica's desire and their deceit makes them one of the most beautifully drawn couples to appear on the stage in years. (4/25/11.) (Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

SISTER ACT

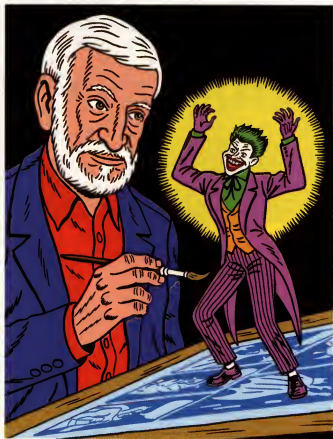
This musical, starring Victoria Clark and Patricia Miller, was adapted from the 1992 movie, in which a lounge singer witnesses a murder and must go undercover in a convent. With music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Glenn Slater, and a book by Cherri and Bill Steinkellner; Jerry Zaks directs. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.)

SLEEP NO MORE

Punchdrunk interprets "Macbeth," set in a noir-era hotel. (Reviewed in this issue.) (McKittrick Hotel, 530 W. 27th St. 866-811-4111.)

WAR HORSE

An epic tale of a boy and his horse, based on Michael Morpurgo's 1982 children's book, performed by humans and puppets, in a National Theatre of Great Britain and Lincoln Center co-production. It's a show about the nature of man, which the co-directors, Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris, share with the utmost control and artistry. Everything about it works, especially the animals—horses, birds, even a goose—created by the Handspring Puppet Company. Set in southwestern England and in France before, during, and after the First World War, "War Horse" follows the story of a poor English boy named Albert Narrcott (the charming Seth Numrich), who falls in love with the only being who seems to love him unconditionally: his horse, Joey.



The comic-book artist Jerry Robinson, at the School of Visual Arts.

a modern riff on Molière's "The Misanthrope." Mamie Gummer and Hamish Linklater star. In previews. Opens May 1. (136 E. 13th St. 212-352-3101.)

NOW PLAYING

BEING HAROLD PINTER

This play by the Belarus Free Theatre—presented at the Under the Radar Festival in January 2011 and now in repertory at La Mama, co-produced by the Public—is based on letters from Belarusian political prisoners and excerpts from the writings of Harold Pinter. In Russian and Belarusian with subtitles, this bare-bones performance, directed by Vladimir Shcherban, is hard to follow: seven actors, moving from skit to skit, play victims or perpetrators, based on actual people or characters out of Pinter's plays—screaming, taunting, crying, disassociating, torturing, and being tortured. Occasionally, an actor playing Pinter—a master at depicting subtle domestic violence—tells the audience about his artistic process. In real life, all the members of this company have been harassed, threatened by the K.G.B., and jailed.

As Joey grows from a foal into a horse, Albert grows from a wide-eyed innocent into a strong and brave soldier. Beneath the play's gray, smoky realism, the essential narrative is one of hope. (4/25/11) (Vivian Beaumont, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

WONDERLAND

This modern take on "Alice in Wonderland" is more Dr. Phil than Lewis Carroll, a psychologizing fairy tale for glib times, by Gregory Boyd, Jack Murphy, and the composer Frank Wildhorn ("The Scarlet Pimpernel"). Here, Alice (the bely Janet Dacal) is a jaded New York mom with a crumbling marriage and a stalled career writing children's books. A white rabbit leads her down an elevator to a dreamworld, where, instead of absurdist wordplay, we get jokes about reality TV and Starbucks and life lessons so trite they'd seem lame coming from a fortune cookie. Children will most likely enjoy the candy-colored effects but will want to see more of Carly Rose Sonenclar, the gifted child actress who plays Alice's daughter, Chloe. (Marquis, Broadway at 46th St. 877-250-2929.)

Also Playing

ANYTHING GOES: Stephen Sondheim, 124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200. **ARCADIA:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. **THE BOOK OF MORMON:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **GO BACK TO WHERE YOU ARE:** Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through May 1. **HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING:** Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST:** American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. **MARIE AND BRUCE:** Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. **THE OTHER PLACE:** Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200. Through May 1. **THAT CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON:** Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

NIGHT LIFE ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to check in advance to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL

237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—April 30: Best known for his elfin vocals for the progressive-rock juggernaut Yes, Jon Anderson has been involved in a protracted spat with the legendary band ever since he pulled out of a fortieth-anniversary tour, in 2008. He's currently touring on his own, playing acoustic sets of Yes classics, and his vocals were sampled on Kanye West's most recent album.

THE BELL HOUSE

149 7th St., Brooklyn (718-643-6510)—April 29: In 2008, Scott McCaughey and Steve Wynn, a couple of garage-rock lifers with an addiction to hard-bell, pooled their songwriting talents and formed the Baseball Project, drafting Linda Pitmon and Peter Back to fill out the lineup. Their second album, "High and Inside," is a great collection of songs about diamond heroes and villains, past and present. Another of Wynn's groups, the Miracle 3, bats leadoff. April 30: Alejandro Escovedo, who was born in Texas to Mexican immigrants, was part of the punk movement in San Francisco in the seventies, as a member of the Nuns, before settling in Austin and honing his craft as a singer-songwriter. A few years ago, he survived a critical battle with hepatitis C and is now back in full force, his voice a powerful rock instrument. His latest record, "Street Songs of Love," was one of last year's best. He'll be performing with his excellent band, the Sensitive Boys.

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancy St. (212-533-2111)—April 28: Buffalo Tom, a chronically underrated alternative-rock trio from Boston, combines the guitar bombast of its fellow-Bostonians Dinosaur Jr. with more straightforward, solid rock fare.

CITY WINERY

155 Varick St. (212-608-0555)—April 29-May 1: The singer-songwriter Marshall Crenshaw, who cut

his teeth in the skinny-tied era of New Wave, is a tirelessly versatile musician. Here, Crenshaw and his band will celebrate his thirtieth year in the business by returning to the days of "Something's Gonna Happen." May 3-4: Bruce Cockburn, the Ottawa guitarist, singer, and composer, has been infusing his finely made songs with spirituality and social consciousness since the release of his first album, in 1970. His latest is called "Small Source of Comfort," and was recorded with a band that includes his frequent collaborator Jenny Scheimann, the brilliant and sensitive violinist, who will open with a set of her own material.

GLASSLANDS GALLERY

289 Kent Ave., between S. 1st and S. 2nd Sts., Brooklyn (No phone)—April 30: Nicole Schneit is taking her earthy indie-pop outfit Air Waves on the road for the next month, opening up for the emo old-guarders Joan of Arc. Before she goes, though, Air Waves plays this Williamsburg performance space with two Austin up-and-comers: Hatchet Wound and the extremely promising Soft Healer, a smoky, soulful quartet.

HIGHLINE BALLROOM

431 W. 16th St. (212-414-5994)—April 29: The longtime San Diego indie rockers in Pinback have made a respectable career out of playing it safe. They've been crafting snaky, unassuming slow burners for nearly fifteen years and show no sign of flagging. The band released a new seven-inch this past month in honor of Record Store Day called "Information Retrieved Pt. A," a preview of their fifth long-player, slated for a 2012 release. April 30: In June, Garland Jeffreys will release his first album of new material in thirteen years, "The King of In-Between," supported by such guests as Lou Reed and Duncan Sheik. The material is as uncannily fresh and forceful as the songs on his debut record from 1973. The Sheephead Bay, Brooklyn, native specializes in an endearing snarl over an insistent, sinuous beat, and when he sings "twenty-two stops to the city," on the new song "Coney Island Winter," you're on that train.

KNITTING FACTORY

361 Metropolitan Ave., Brooklyn (347-529-6696)—April 27: The old-hand m.c. Devin the Dude got his start as a founding member of Houston's Odd Squad, a lighthearted hip-hop crew from the early nineties. The group was ultimately reinvigorated as the Coughie Brothaz, with Devin's self-denigrating drawl taking center stage. The Brothaz are touring in support of their latest self-released record, "Fresh Brew."

MERCURY LOUNGE

217 F. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—April 30: Lake, an upbeat indie-rock outfit, has a thing for the sounds of seventies light FM. Ages and Ages, a seven-piece group, considers the audience a vital band member and the venue a communal meeting place. It delivers massive choral arrangements driven by the percussive force of the tambourine. With Sea of Bees, Julie Ann Bee's heartfelt folk project.

MUSIC HALL OF WILLIAMSBURG

66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn (718-486-5400)—April 27: Fedi Kuti, the son of the Afro-beat innovator Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, is here with his powerhouse ensemble, Positive Force. April 28: Noisy, a new video-based music Web site, has recruited three buzzed-out indie acts to celebrate its New York launch. This free show will feature the L.A. soft-rockers Puro Instinct, the vintage posters Cults, and the youngster Bradley Oberholzer's keyed-up indie-pop act Oberholzer.

THE ROCK SHOP

249 Fourth Ave., Brooklyn (718-230-5740)—April 30: The trio Pearl and the Beard runs the gamut from jazzy soft rock to raucous folk anthems. Kingsley Flood plays a modern brand of Americana complete with melodic fiddle parts. Ugly Purple Sweater is Sam McCormally and Rachel Lord's warm and energetic banjo-heavy folk collaboration.

SOUTHPAW

125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—The monthly soul-music party "Dig Deeper" has made its name by bringing artists to New York City who recorded forty or fifty odd years ago and putting them back on the stage, many for the first time in decades. The organizers, DJ Honky (Richard Lewis) and Mr. Robinson (Michael Rob-

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inson), search high and low for long-lost artists, and a little while ago, Mr. Robinson happened across a reference to DeRobert and the Half-Truths, a group with the vintage sixties sound so dear to his heart. He hadn't heard of them, and wondered how he had missed them. As it turns out, they're not from the past so much as from Nashville, where they've been recording and playing locally for the past few years. DJ Honky invited the seven-piece act, fronted by the no-holds-barred vocalist DeRobert, to make its New York City debut, on April 30. With their lachrymose and buddies Magic in Threes.

TERMINAL 5
610 W. 56th St. (212-582-6600)—April 29: After moonlighting for two critically acclaimed albums with Jack White's Dead Weather project, the gritty vocalist Alison Mosshardt returns to her own blues-rock duo, the Kills. Their propulsive new album, "Blood Pressure," sounds as self-assured and full of swagger as ever.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL

59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through April 30: Lonette McKee, fondly remembered from acclaimed revivals of "Show Boat" in 1983 and 1994, will no doubt revisit familiar ground in her new show, "Can't Help Lovin'."

BIRDLAND

315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—April 26-30: The piano trio is the customary and seemingly perfect setting for Steve Kuhn to display his brand of edgy lyricism. Once again, he's found two spot-on accompanists: the bassist Eddie Gomez and the drummer Joey Baron.

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St. (212-475-8592)—April 26-May 1: The saxophonist James Carter, a virtuoso who isn't averse to getting down and dirty, convenes his organ trio with two special guests, the trumpeter Nicholas Payton and the guitarist James (Blood) Ulmer, neither one of them a stranger to the blues.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA

33 W. 60th St. (212-238-9595)—April 26-May 1: The drummer Duduka Da Fonseca and the pianist Helio Alves, assisted by the noted guitarist Toninho Horta, salute the premier bossa-novoa composer Antonio Carlos Jobim.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—April 29-May 1: Pee Wee Ellis, a saxophonist whose jazz bona fides have been obscured by his work with James Brown and Van Morrison, gets to indulge in his first musical love alongside the pianist Larry Willis and the bass wizard Christian McBride.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

Broadway at 60th St. (212-721-6500)—April 29-30: The historically obsessed pianist Marcus Roberts performs the music of two pioneering keyboardists: Earl Hines, who applied Louis Armstrong's swing message to his own instrument in the nineteen-twenties, and Bud Powell, who brought bebop to the piano twenty years later. Supporting players include the trumpeter Marcus Printup, the saxophonist Ted Nash, and the drummer Jason Marsalis.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Gave Charlie Hunter a seven-string guitar and a drummer and he's good to go. Here he's joined by a host of acutely attuned percussionists, including Bobby Previte (April 28), Adam Cruz (April 29), Eric Kalkb (April 30), and Shawn Pelton (May 1).

SMALLS

183 W. 10th St. (No phone)—April 27: Bebop served straight up by the pianist Mike LeDonne, the bassist John Webster, and the drummer Joe Farnsworth.

VILLAGE YANQUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—April 26-May 1: Week two of Bill Frisell's extended

engagement finds the innovative guitarist leading a quartet with the bassist Tony Scherr, the drummer Kenny Wollesen, and the trumpeter Ron Miles.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—"Richard Serra Drawing: A Retrospective." Through Aug. 28. ♦ "Cézanne's Card Players." Through May 8. ♦ "Guitar Heroes: Legendary Craftsmen from Italy to New York."



Katy Grannan's photograph "Anonymous, Los Angeles, 2008," in her current exhibition at Salon 94 Freemans.

Through July 4. ♦ "Rooms with a View: The Open Window in the 19th Century." Through July 4. ♦ "Poetry in Clay: Korean Buncheong Ceramics from Lecum, Samsung Museum of Art." Through Aug. 30. ♦ "Karin Sigurdardottir at the Met." Through May 30. ♦ "Anthony Caro on the Roof." Through Oct. 30. ♦ "Night Vision: Photography After Dark." Through Sept. 18. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—"Picasso: Guitars 1912-1914." Through June 6. ♦ "German Expressionism: The Graphic Impulse." Through July 11. ♦ "Impressions from South Africa, 1965 to Now." Through Aug. 14. ♦ "Looking at Music 3.0." Through June 6. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

MOMA PS1

22-25 Jackson Ave., Queens (718-784-2084)—"Laurel Nakadate Only the Lonely." Through Aug. 8. ♦ "Sergei Jensen." Through May 2. ♦ "Maya Deren: At Land." Through May 2. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3587)—"The Great Upheaval: Modern Art from the Guggenheim's Collection, 1910-1918." Through June 1. ♦ "Found in Translation." Through May 1. (Open Fridays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Saturday evenings until 7:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3600)—"Glenn Ligon: America." Through June 5. ♦ "Singular Visions." Through Nov. 27. ♦ "Dianna Molzan: Bologna Meissen." Through June 19. ♦ "Breaking Ground: The Whitney's Founding Collection." Opens April 28. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Lorna Simpson: Gathered." Through Aug. 21. ♦ "Tip: Heritage of the Great Plains." Through May 15. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Thursdays and Friday evenings until 10.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—"Beast The Inside Story." Through Aug. 15. ♦ "Body and Spirit: Tibetan Medical Paintings." Through July 17. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

ASIA SOCIETY

Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—"A Prince's Manuscript Unbound: Muhammad Juki's Shahnamah." Through May 1. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (212-849-8300)—"Color Moves: Art & Fashion by Sonia Delaunay." Through June 19. ♦ "Set in Style: The Jewelry of Van Cleef & Arpels." Through July 4. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 10 to 5, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION

1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—"Rembrandt and His School: Paintings, Drawings, and Etchings from the Frick and Lust Collections." Through May 15. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

GREY ART GALLERY

100 Washington Sq. E. (212-998-6780)—"John Storrs: Machine Age Modernism." Through July 9. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6, Saturdays, 11 to 5, and Wednesday evenings until 8.)

JAPAN SOCIETY

333 E. 47th St. (212-832-1155)—"Bye Bye Kitty!!!" (Between Heaven and Hell in Contemporary Japanese Art.) Through June 12. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 11 to 6, Fridays, 11 to 9, and weekends, 11 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—"Maira Kalman: Various Illuminations of a Crazy World." Through July 31. ♦ "The Art of Matrimony: Thirty Splendid Marriage Contracts from the Jewish Theological Seminary Library." Through June 26. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 5:45, Thursdays, 11 to 8, and Fridays, 11 to 4.)

MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0000)—"The Diary." Through May 22. ♦ "The Changing Face of William Shakespeare." Through May 1. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO

Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-831-7272)—"Luis Camnitzer." Through May 29. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, Sundays, 1 to 5, and Wednesday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

2 Columbus Circle (212-299-7777)—"The Global Africa Project." Through May 15. ♦ "A Bit of Clay on the Skin: New Ceramic Jewelry." Through Sept. 4. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

NEUE GALERIE

1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—"Vienna 1900: Style and Identity." Through June 27. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM

235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—"George Condo: Mental States." Through May 8. ♦ "Lynda

Benglis." Through June 19. ♦ "Museum as Hub: An Accord Is First and Foremost only a Proposition." Through May 1. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.) **STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM** 144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—"Stephen Burks: Man Made." Through June 26. ♦ "Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of FLUX/USE Scores." Through June 26. ♦ "Sculpted, Etched, and Cut Metal Works from the Permanent Collection." Through June 26. (Open Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

"MALEVICH AND THE AMERICAN LEGACY" Kazimir Malevich was the first great artist to make art look like something your kid could do—if your kid had thought of doing it in war-isolated Moscow, in 1915, and was a genius. Bring a mind-set of naive wonder to this invigorating show of a half-dozen classic paintings by the artist and nearly fifty works by twenty-five Americans, ranging in time from a 1949 Barnett Newman to a 2011 Mark Grotjahn. Like radio waves, Malevich's crackling simplicities of geometric shapes on white grounds seem to have been picked up by the antennae of artists who may or may not have had him consciously in mind. The show proves that those messages are still beaming. Through April 30. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-744-2313.)

Short List

AI WEIWEI: Pulitzer Fountain, Fifth Ave. at 59th St. No phone. For more information, visit circlofanimals.com. Opens May 2. **ROMARE BEARDEN:** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 212-247-0082. Through May 21. **WILLEM DE KOONING:** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292. Opens April 29. **ALAN SHIELDS:** Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-445-0444. Opens April 28. **BRUCE WRIGHT:** Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 212-397-3930. Through April 30.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

DAVIS, CHERUBINI

Is it ever a compulsion to describe a work of art as "drab"? Not really, but every rule has its exception, and in this case, these jubilant homespun ceramic-and-wood sculptures—a collaboration between Taylor Davis and Nicole Cherubini—are it. Amorphous, putty-colored slabs of clay are mounted onto wooden bases and hung on the wall; freestanding square ceramics punctured with holes (rolled posters are casually stuck in them) are the color of burnt toast. There are a few snazzy grace notes: crumpled forms glazed in red, white, and blue suggest an ersatz French flag, and a rectangular pink box appears to split the surface of a log. The over-all mood suggests a punk-rock George Ohr. Through May 14. (Newman Popashevsky, 504 W. 22nd St. 212-274-9166.)

SAUL FLETCHER

Allusive, enigmatic, and deeply personal, Fletcher's work—color and black-and-white photographs of his friends and family, landscapes, interiors, and collage-like constructions—can feel like an extended self-portrait. In this exceptionally strong show of new and old material, the mood is even more meditative than usual, as if the artist were reasserting not just his career but his life. Pictures of his mother and father, taken nearly seventeen years apart, provide solid anchors, as do several austere wooded landscapes, revisited and reclaimed from his past. Fletcher also returns to the paint-splattered studio wall that's supported his more recent installation work to record his rich, rough-hewn private iconography. Through April 30. (Kern, 532 W. 20th St. 212-367-9663.)

CHARLES MOORE

The intrepid Alabama-born photographer, who died last year at seventy-nine, took many of the most memorable images of the sit-ins, demonstrations, marches, and confrontations that defined the civil-

rights struggles in the sixties. All those photographs are here, in an important and affecting show that focusses on a number of key events, including an early arrest of Martin Luther King Jr., the furious resistance to the enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi, and the brutal police response to young protesters in Birmingham. As a *Life* photographer with a wide audience, Moore was one of the period's key witnesses and the very model of an engaged photojournalist. Through May 7. (Kashner, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978.)

SUSAN PAULSEN

If the aura of cozy domesticity in Paulsen's photographs sometimes seems a bit self-satisfied, it's also unexpectedly ingratiating. This is the good life, centered around family and a house on Block Island, and filled out with still-life details: an antique water pitcher, a trio of gleaming pearls, a jar of zinnias under a yellow plastic flyswatter. The repeated presence of a nude young woman throws things off a bit, especially since she looks so much like Andrew Wyeth's famous neighbor and late-life obsession, Helga, but she never steps out of the role of artist's model to disturb the tranquil mood. Through April 30. (Bell, 511 W. 25th St. 212-691-3883.)

Short List

DAVID DUPUIS: Eller, 615 W. 27th St. 212-206-6411. Through April 30. **RENEE GREEN:** Dee, 545 W. 20th St. 212-924-7545. Through May 21. **LISA HOKE:** Harris, 529 W. 20th St. 212-463-9666. Opens April 28. **ELIZABETH MURRAY:** Pace, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000. Through April 30. **"ADDICTED TO HIGHS AND LOWS":** Bortolami, 520 W. 20th St. 212-727-2050. Through April 30. **"L'AMOUR FOU, PICASSO AND MARIE-THÉRÈSE":** Gagosian, 522 W. 21st St. 212-741-1717. Through June 25.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

ALICE CHANNER / JAMIE ISENSTEIN / J. PARKER VALENTINE

This ensemble of three women sculptors is a bit ponderous—all loosely refer to the body—but the artists' differences give the show its fire. Valentine's handmade vessels are infused with pathos; her mother, who died when Valentine was a girl, made the scratchy line drawings adhered to their surfaces. Isenstein's slapstick sculptures are double entendres: two red-and-white flowers nestled in lensless black glasses suggest cartoon bloodshot eyes (those aren't specs, they're a vase); the drinking end of a straw, jutting from a glass bottle, has burst into flames (that's not seltzer, it's fuel). Channer puts fashion through post-minimalist paces by casting a pair of elastic waistbands in aluminum and installing the results on the wall. Through May 1. (Cooley, 34 Orchard St. 212-680-0564.)

ROCHELLE FEINSTEIN

Even if Feinstein's new paintings didn't have such a great backstory, this would still be the most rollicking show in town. A group of drawings installed in the office (and reproduced in a zine-like catalog) lay out the scenarios while consolidating her studio—and fretting about her twenty-year career—Feinstein hit on a scheme to make a new body of work using only materials she had at hand. This belt-tightening bricolage resulted in abstract paintings that incorporate items as various as Styrofoam, a scrim embellished with gold and silver leaf, a birthday present from the sculptor Rachel Harrison (complete with the box that it came in), and a Craigslist ad seeking a nude model to pose for an abstract painting. Rauschenberg's "Composites" go recessionista. Through May 1. (On Stellar Rays, 133 Orchard St. 212-598-5012.)

KATY GRANNAN

Grannan's latest series of portraits, made on the streets of San Francisco and Los Angeles, are real knockouts—among the most powerfully iconic images of this new century, even if they recall the seediness and desperation of Hollywood circa "The Day of the Locust." Grannan's subjects, all identified as "Anonymous," are a mix of drifters, showoffs, freaks,

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK A CUT ABOVE

Bring whatever you think of Romare Bearden to his startling show of twenty-two collages at the Michael Rosenfeld gallery. Your mind will change. The cut-and-paste pictures on the artist's usual themes of black-American and



African life—tenement stoops, jazz clubs, jungle scenes—are supreme art, as fresh as this morning. From late phases of his long career, before his death, in 1988, at the age of seventy-six, they upend a besetting weakness of his paintings: an eternal emulator's will to synthesize all his revered influences, from early-Renaissance fresco to Picasso. Here, the heroes are forgotten in choral cadenzas. Most apt are Bearden's roots in satirical cartooning (he studied with George Grosz in the thirties) and pictorial strategies that are part Cubist and part Netherlandish (Brueghel, de Hooch). A naturalistic scale reigns: big shapes are nearby and small ones are faraway, though all mob the picture plane. This lends coherence to wild disjunctures of photographic and painted elements, with pleasures of tonic color and cunning texture that stagger the eye and stir the soul. At last, Bearden joins the modern pantheon.

—Peter Schjeldahl

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK A NEW WOMAN

All too often actors are limited by their looks. Generally, we get "sexy" when a female performer trades on her own desirability, and "rugged" when a reasonably handsome guy takes the stage with a



few days' stubble. But what about those who have more to show than their expressive mugs? Although Laurie Metcalf was astonishing in Ethan Hawke's essential 2010 production of Sam Shepard's "A Lie of the Mind," for many years she was typecast as the ditzy heart-as-big-as-a-house gal (she played Roseanne Barr's sister, Jackie, on the sitcom "Roseanne"). In Sharr White's quiet ensemble piece "The Other Place" (at the Lucille Lortel), Metcalf gets to take on the duelling ideas of mortality and memory. With her strong, fine legs and sometimes bullying stance, Metcalf is both erotic and authoritative as Juliana, a middle-aged lecturer coping with illness and abandonment. By working against type, Metcalf embodies an all too rare kind of character onstage: the powerful, distinctive, intelligent woman.

—Hilton Als

and ordinary citizens, some obviously more damaged and delusional than others, as an accompanying video makes especially clear. Seen against white walls and under California's brilliant noonday sun, they're pitilessly exposed, every broken blood vessel and tattered garment on display. These are ganglyes of a sort tarnished New West, at once grotesque and magnificent. Through May 14, (Salon 94 Bowery, 243 Bowery, at Stanton St. 212-979-0001; Salon 94 Freeman, 1 Freeman Alley. 212-529-7400.)

Short List

BRIAN DEGRAW: Fuentes, 55 Delancey St. 212-577-1201. Through May 1. **CHERYL DONEGAN** and **TOM MEACHAM:** Beauchene, 21 Orchard St. 212-375-8043. Through May 14. **R. M. FISCHER:** K.S. Art, 73 Leonard St. 212-219-9918. Through May 7. **MARK MORRISROE:** Artists Space, 38 Greene St. 212-226-3970. Through May 1. **"KEEP OUT YOU THIEVING BASTARDS":** Hendershot, 195 Chrystie St. 212-239-1210. Through May 8. **"UNDER DESTRUCTION":** Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway, at Broome St. 212-925-2035. Through May 8.

GALLERIES—BROOKLYN

"ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT (SELF-DECLARED)"

This project is an all too rare example of a conceptual-political artist using humor to make a point: Maureen Connor and the Institute for Wishful Thinking have compiled a mischievous project soliciting proposals for unofficial artist residencies at U.S. government agencies. The didactics are mercifully few, but they do pack a punch. One chart illustrates a fact that most of us know: the lion's share of taxpayer dollars ends up at the Pentagon. The entertainment here lies in reading the pie-in-the-sky fantasies dreamed up by participants, like the Nisumi Collective's proposal for a temporary-monuments division at the Department of the Interior, dedicated to "psychic aerial projections" and "unidentified flying memorials." Through May 8. (Momena, 359 Bedford Ave. 718-218-8058.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

For the opening of its six-week season, the company looks back at some of the most iconic, bracing works in its repertoire. The first week is devoted to Balanchine's "black and white" ballets, known for their distilled choreography and stripped-down aesthetic. (One of these, "Episodes," hasn't been seen here since 2007.) Other highlights include the "dancers' choice" program (June 12), co-curated by the soloist Adrian Danchig-Waring and the corps member Amanda Hanks; the return of Robbins's dreamlike "Antique Epigraphs"; and, for lovers of musical theatre, four Broadway-inspired programs. The season's big-ticket premiere, a version of Kurt Weill's sung ballet "Seven Deadly Sins" (May 11), features choreography by the Broadway veteran Lynne Taylor-Corbett ("Titanic" and "Swing!"), with the raspy-voiced diva Patti LaPore singing Brecht's wry lyrics. • May 3 at 7:30: "Square Dance," "Agon," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." (David H. Koch, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Through June 12.)

PERFORMANCE MIX FESTIVAL

In its twenty-fifth year, New Dance Alliance's festival brings in guests from out of town and out of the country. Passing through early in the week is 50Collective, an international band of improvisers united by the ideas of the Venezuelan wildman David Zambrano. On Friday the artists hail from the Balkans; on Saturday, two of them represent Montreal. Come Sunday, there will be enough distinguished alumni for every candle on the cake, with three minutes each to perform—including Yvonne Meier, Sally Silvers, and Arthur Aviles. (Dixon Place, 161a Christie St. 212-219-0736. April 26-May 1 at 7:30.)

NICOLE WOLCOTT / VANESSA WALTERS

Wolcott and Walters move the trash-glam twins of their last dance into the more congenial environment of a cabaret at Joe's Pub. "Alley of the Dolls" borrows characters and a campy attitude from "Alley of the Dolls," in a series of sketches—spoken, sung, and danced—about celebrity culture and fame. The loose theme of "making it" finds room for the stories of a disenchanted Rockette and a cross-dressing cadet, but most of the guests at this party are all surface and makeup, catfishing, vamping in heels, clawing for attention in slow-mo. (425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. April 28-29 at 7.)

LISA LARA MALVACIAS / THIRD CLASS CITIZEN "Amanda & the Black Void of Space" is dark in both its emotional tone and its lighting scheme. The dancers move slowly and show no skin. Long sections pass in blackout, the sound of feet providing the only sensory access to the dance's patterns. It's Malvacias's metaphor for history, so much of which is lost and unknowable. Amanda, when she appears, is probably not what you're expecting. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-242-0800. April 28-30 at 8.)

ANITA CHENG DANCE

Cheng is known for Cunninghamesque pieces that make sophisticated use of technology. "For Once, Then Something" (2007), with its thirteen ways of lighting a dance (horizontal striations, superimposed bar codes), is characteristic. Her new work "Habits," however, focuses exclusively on movement and music. An elegant trio measures out space, assembling and disassembling human structures. Gordon Beerman provides scores for both selections, played live, and the stabs of high-modern atonality in the premiere push its gestural drama back toward Martha Graham. (Abrons Arts Center, 466 Grand St. 212-352-3101. April 28-30 at 8 and May 1 at 5.)

"FRIDAYS AT NOON"

As one of only a few African-Americans involved in concert dance in the postmodern forties, Pearl Primus was a pioneer. During her career, her gifts as a performer—warmth, a legendary jump—overshadowed her choreography, and after her death, her art faded into history. A new biography by Peggy and Murray Schwartz provides an occasion for students from Amherst College to revive some of Primus's famous solos, such as "Strange Fruit," in a free show at the 92nd Street Y, where she once performed them. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5553. April 29 at noon.)

BATTERY DANCE COMPANY

Over the thirty-five years of his troupe's existence, Jonathan Hollander has evolved from a traditional choreographer into a more collaborative artist. That transition marks the shape of the company's anniversary premiere: Hollander stages an opening in his original style (balletic, formal), then hands over the choreographic reins, in turn, to each of the five dancers. The resulting impression is of clever and not so clever notions given a little space to grow—ideas about digital looping, water, and conformity held together by Polarity's! electro-primitive score and a kid-in-the-candy-store use of the 3D Art + Technology Center's wraparound screens. (80 Greenwich St. 212-352-3101. April 29 at 3 and 8, April 30 at 2 and 8, May 1 at 1 and 7, May 2 at 10:30 a.m. and 3, and May 3 at 7:30.)

"WORKS & PROCESS" / "ON TO ACT II"

In the leadup to opening night at the Met (May 16), American Ballet Theatre stops in at the Guggenheim for a conversation about what dancers do once they retire from the stage. A distinguished roster of alumni from the company—including Susan Jaffe and Frederic Franklin, who is ninety-six—and a current star, José Manuel Carreño (who retires this year), will discuss their long careers. There will be dancing as well, of course, both by A.B.T. company members, who will be presenting excerpts from the upcoming season (including Franklin's staging of "Opella," and by students from the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School. The event is sold out, but there will be a returns line each evening, and live broadcasting is available online, at ustream.tv/channel/worksandprocess. (Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3587. May 1-2 at 7:30.)

"BAC FLICKS": "MONDAYS WITH MERCE"
In the final installment of this illuminating series devoted to Merce Cunningham's dances, the works on view will be "Crises" (1960) and "Native Green" (1985), as filmed by Charles Atlas. The mistress of ceremonies, as always, will be the flame-haired dancer Nancy Dalva, the producer of the Web site "Mondays with Merce," an episode of which will also be screened, featuring Gus Solomons. During the break, Dalva and the wonderfully wry Solomons, who danced for the company in the sixties, will discuss the knotty issue of drama in Cunningham's choreography. (Baryshnikov Arts Center, 450 W. 37th St. 212-868-4444, May 2 at 7.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

David McVicar's robust yet traditional 2009 production of "Il Trovatore" has found a home at the Met. It returns with last fall's lead tenor, Marcelo Álvarez, as well as some first-rate newcomers: Sondra Radvanovsky, Dolara Zajick, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky; Marco Armiliato once again conducts. (April 27 at 8 and April 30 at 1. These are the final performances.) ♦ Robert Lepage follows last autumn's pro-

(The show is based on the cult-classic British thriller from 1964, which starred Kim Stanley and Richard Attenborough.) Lauren Flanigan and Kim Josephson take the roles of a sinister medium and her pliable husband, who hatch a kidnapping plot that goes bad; George Manahan conducts. (Steven Osagood replaces Manahan in the first and third performances.) (April 28-30 at 8 and May 1 at 1:30. These are the final performances.) (David H. Koch Theatre, 212-721-6300.)

JUILLIARD OPERA: "L'HEURE ESPAGNOLE" / "GIANNI SCHICCHI"

These one-act comic gems, by Ravel and Puccini, respectively, are great vehicles for robust young singers, which Juilliard has in abundance. Here they'll be put through their paces by the director Tomer Zvulun and the conductor Keri-Lynn Wilson. (Peter Jay Sharp Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. April 27 and April 28 at 8 and May 1 at 2. Tickets are available at the Juilliard box office.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Emanuel Ax inhabits a unique role in New York's music world, that of both home-town favorite and international star. In his three-night run with Alan

less ensemble, soloing in two starkly contrasting works: Mozart's charming Rondo in C Major, K. 373, and Karl Amadeus Hartmann's turbulent "Concerto Funèbre." Music by Strauss and Haydn (the Symphony No. 104, "London") rounds out the program. (Carnegie Hall, 212-247-7800, April 29 at 8.)

NEW YORK CHORAL SOCIETY

An impressive cast of vocal soloists—Angela Meade, Tamara Mumford, Yeghishe Manucharyan, and Burak Bilgili—is a strong point in the choir's concert at Carnegie Hall, conducted by John Daly Goodwin. The repertoire is Dvůřák's "Stabat Mater," accompanied by the Brooklyn Philharmonic. (212-247-7800, May 1 at 2.)

ECCO

The East Coast Chamber Orchestra, to give its full name, performs a concert in the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music series that offers works by Mendelssohn, Stravinsky ("Apollon Musagète"), Mozart (the Piano Concerto No. 13 in C Major, with Sara Davis Buechner), and Kerouac, Bach (a première, Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, Clinton St. at Montague St., Brooklyn Heights, May 1 at 3. Tickets at the door.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

Like the Detroit Symphony, Philly's sterling band is a great orchestra trying to survive in an economically troubled city. Its final Carnegie Hall concert of the season features Charles Dutoit leading the kind of music he does best—Stravinsky, specifically the ballet "Apollon Musagète" and the quasi-oratorio "Oedipus Rex" (featuring the tenor Paul Groves in the title role and Petra Lang as Jocaste, assisted by the Men of the Philadelphia Singers Chorus). (212-247-7800, May 3 at 8.)

RECITALS

YURI BASHMET AND EYGENY KISSIN

Two Russian superstars unite on the stage of Carnegie Hall to perform three masterworks for viola and piano: sonatas by Schubert ("Arpeggione"), Brahms (No. 2 in E-flat Major), and Shostakovich. (212-247-7800, April 28 at 8.)

BARGEMUSIC

Martin Katz, a distinguished accompanist who has performed with the likes of Marilyn Horne, Frederica von Stade, and David Daniels, comes to the floating chamber-music series to back up the baritone Jesse Blumberg in performances of "Die Schöne Müllerin" and "Winterreise," respectively, part of a weekend Schubertiade that also includes a concert given by the pianist Steven Beck. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn, 718-624-2083, April 28 and April 30 at 8. For full schedule, see bargemusic.org.)

PAUL LEWIS

The poetic British pianist, a favorite at the Metropolitan Museum, returns to perform an all-Schubert program that includes the Impromptu, Op. 90, and the Piano Sonata in G Major, D. 894. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949, April 29 at 7.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER: "STRIKING SOUNDS"

April 29 at 7:30: The Society devotes a pair of concerts to the glories of the percussion section, a category of instruments that came into its own only after Stravinsky released the torrent of "Le Sacre." Thomas Hampson (joined by such artists as the pianist Gilbert Kalish and the percussionist David Cossin) is the special guest in the first of them, which offers a generous set of selections from George Crumb's "American Songbooks" for baritone, piano, and percussion and a performance of Tan Dun's "Snow in June." ♦ May 1 at 5: The composer George Crumb—as well as Kalish, a valued longtime colleague—once more has pride of place in a concert that concludes with his "Music for a Summer Evening" and begins with music by Xenakis and Bartók (the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion). Joining Kalish are the pianist Wu Han and the percussionists Daniel Druckman and Ayano Kataoka. (Alice Tully Hall, 212-875-5788.)

"MUSIC OF STEVE REICH"

Carnegie Hall celebrates the minimalist maestro's seventy-fifth year with a concert given by the Kro-



The "Dig Deeper" soul-music party presents DeRobert and the Half-Truths.

duction of "Das Rheingold"—the first of the four "Ring" operas he's staging at the Met—with a new "Die Walküre." The top-notch cast features Deborah Voigt (singing her first Brinnhilde), Eva Maria Westbroek (in her Met debut), Stephanie Blythe, Jonas Kaufmann, and Bryn Terfel; James Levine. (April 28 and May 2 at 6:30.) ♦ There are few entertainments at the Met more delightful than Mark Morris's production of Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice," which adds a helpful note of charm to one of the most serious operas ever written. (The dancing, of course, is marvellous.) The communicative David Daniels and a long-awaited newcomer, Kate Royal, take the leading roles, with the engaging Lisette Oropesa as Amor; Anthony Walker, in another Met debut, conducts. (April 29 at 8.) ♦ Otto Schenk's production of "Rigoletto" features such singers as Diana Damrau, Giuseppe Filanoti, and Željko Lučić; the superb Fabio Luisi conducts. (Nino Macchiatelli replaces Damrau in the second performance.) (April 30 and May 3 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House, 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA

For the last presentation of its season—and who knows when the financially troubled company will return?—City Opera is mounting the New York premiere of "Seance on a Wet Afternoon," the first opera by Stephen Schwartz, the Broadway master craftsman responsible for such hits as "Wicked."

Gilbert and the Philharmonic—which will include his hundredth concert with the orchestra—he is the soloist in Messiaen's "Couleurs de la Cité Céleste," a work bookended by Debussy's "Estampes," played by the pianist alone, and Mahler's Fifth Symphony, in which the ensemble's skills will be powerfully apparent. (Avery Fisher Hall, 212-875-5656, April 28 at 7:30, April 29 at 2, and April 30 at 8.)

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK: "ELIJAH"

It's a busy week for choral music in New York. First off is Kent Tritel's esteemed avocational ensemble, which performs Mendelssohn's oratorio with orchestra and a quartet of vocal soloists that includes the mezzo-soprano Mary Phillips and the tenor Nicholas Phan. (Carnegie Hall, 212-247-7800, April 27 at 8.) ♦ MARVIN DAVID LEVY'S "ATONEMENT" Levy, best known for his opera "Mourning Becomes Electra," is also the composer of this oratorio on Jewish history, which receives its world premiere in a free concert at Temple Emanu-El. The soloists are the soprano Ana Maria Martinez, the tenor Richard Crawley, and a distinguished narrator, Mario Cuomo; Eugene Kohn conducts the chorus and orchestra. (Fifth Ave. at 65th St. April 28 at 7:30. No tickets required.)

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The young violinist Arabella Steinbacher is the latest guest star to appear with the adept conductor-



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nos Quartet, So Percussion, the Bang on a Can All-Stars, and Eighth Blackbird, featuring not only "Mallet Quartet" and "Double Sextet" but the New York premieres of "2x5" and of his latest work, "WTC 9/11." (212-247-7800, April 30 at 8.)

MUSIC AT THE FRICK COLLECTION: LES DÉLICES

The Baroque quartet from Cleveland—a outstanding ensemble of oboe, violin, cello, and harpsichord—makes its New York debut at the museum's elegant auditorium, performing music by Lully, Marais, Philidel, and Couperin. (1 E. 70th St. 212-547-0715, May 1 at 5.)

CHRISTIAN TETZLAFF AND ANTJE WEITHAAS

Two formidable German violinists—one a star, the other a professional's professional—team up at Zankel Hall to play fourteen of Bartók's Violin Duos as well as virtuoso dazzlers by Leclair, Bériot, and Ysaÿe. (212-247-7800, May 1 at 7:30.)

"NYFOS NEXT: PHIL KLINE AND FRIENDS"

The New York Festival of Song, which revived the art of the song recital when many had left it for dead, is moving forward once more with its series of contemporary-music programs. The next concert, spearheaded by the always compelling post-minimalist, features music by Corey Dargel, David Lang, Meredith Monk, and Elliott Sharp, as well as three new songs by Kline; the performers include Dargel, the pianist Kathleen Supové, and the violinist Todd Reynolds. (Baryshnikov Arts Center, 450 W. 37th St. May 3 at 7. To reserve free tickets, which are required, call 212-868-4444.)

MOVIES OPENINGS

THE ARBOR

Reviewed this week in *The Current Cinema*, Opening April 27. (Film Forum.)

CAYE OF FORGOTTEN DREAMS

Reviewed this week in *The Current Cinema*, Opening April 29. (In limited release.)

TABLES FOR TWO TORTILLERIA NIXTAMAL

104-05 47th Ave., Corona (718-699-2434)—"You can't get good Mexican food in New York!" is a common refrain in this city, and for the most part, it's true—you can get Mexican food that isn't very good, or good food that isn't very Mexican. Fernando Ruiz and his girlfriend, Shauna Page, are doing something about this problem in a small storefront in Queens, by perfecting the common denominator of any square Mexican meal—the tortilla. Using a process central to the cultures of Mesoamerica, they cook and soak white dent corn in a calcium-hydroxide solution to produce *nixtamal*, which is ground into starchy, dough-like masa. A Rubie Goldberger machine imported from Mexico spins out additive-free tortillas that, along with masa, are sold wholesale to places like La Equina and Whole Foods. The rest of the masa is used for tamales, which can be carried out or eaten on the premises, at cheerful red and yellow picnic benches while catching a soccer game on TV.

The clientele is a mix of local Mexican families who come to stock up and out-of-borough foodies who come to eat and gawk at the low prices. Tacos arrive in orders of three, with a simple garnish of cilantro, onions, and a sliver of lime. The menu is literal: "pork" means just pork, with no added sauce or marinade. The intense, aromatic corn brings a powerful flavor to every dish. Guacamole is practically an afterthought, hidden under thick, unsalted

FAST FIVE

An action film, about a pair of fugitives (Vin Diesel and Paul Walker) who are pursued by the law. Directed by Justin Lin. Opening April 29. (In wide release.)

HOODWINKED TOO! HOOD VS. EVIL

In this animated comedy, Red Riding Hood and the Wolf are sent to investigate the disappearance of Hansel and Gretel. Directed by Mike Disa; with the voices of Hayden Panettiere and Glenn Close. Opening April 29. (In wide release.)

FROM

This romantic drama presents the intersecting stories of a variety of high-school couples. Directed by Joe Nussbaum, starring Annee Teagarden and Thomas McDonell. Opening April 29. (In wide release.)

SYMPATHY FOR DELICIOUS

Mark Ruffalo directed and co-stars in this drama, about a Los Angeles d.j. (Christopher Thornton) who becomes a paraplegic. Opening April 29. (In limited release.)

13 ASSASSINS

Takashi Miike directed this samurai drama, about a group of swordsmen who unite to kill an evil lord. In Japanese. Opening April 29. (In limited release.)

WE GO WAY BACK

A drama, directed by Lynn Shelton, about an actress (Kate Barley) who is haunted by visions of her adolescent self. Opening April 29. (ReRun Gastropub Theatre.)

NOW PLAYING

ARTHUR

A pitiable remake of the slogged "classic" from 1981. As the innocently inebriated millionaire playboy, Russell Brand, who was magnetically funny as a preening, prancing Brit rock star in "Forgetting Sarah Marshall" and "Get Him to the Greek," has been reduced to an elongated baby with a high, timid voice and flailing wrists. Brand's chest hair is gone, and his virile brazenness is at odds with it. Nothing works any better—for long stretches, the movie produces not so much as a titter. With Helen Mirren, as Arthur's nanny (the old John Gielgud role),



chips freshly fried in corn oil. Tamales are substantive and delightfully savory; those with pork and chicken in a chipotle sauce are perfectly smoky and spicy, and those with roasted chiles, cheese, and tomatoes are an equally satisfying vegetarian treat. The Italiano is an unusual homage to the original denizens of the neighborhood, containing sausage, peppers, and fresh mozzarella from Franco's Meat and Deli around the corner. Pozole, a brothly soup made with fluffy hominy and shreds of pork, comes with an assortment of onions, radishes, cabbage, and dried oregano for individually tailored seasoning. Enchiladas *en mole* are essentially chicken tacos drowned in poblano-chile sauce, a complex sweet-spicy dressing made from twenty ingredients. One of the only things on the menu that isn't made with corn is the Mexican bottled Coca-Cola, which is still manufactured with cane sugar—purists claim it has a cleaner, sweeter flavor than the stuff made with high-fructose corn syrup (killjoys claim you're dead either way). The subway ride back to Manhattan gives you time to wonder just what Paul Simon meant when he sang "goodbye to Rosie, the queen of Corona," and the food is cheap enough to leave you an extra dollar for the mariachi band. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées \$2-\$10.)

—Silvia Killingsworth

the likable Jennifer Garner, as a calculating bitch who wants to marry Arthur's money, and the mumblecore queen Greta Gerwig (saddled with terrible lines), as the sensible poor girl who wants to straighten him out. Directed by Jason Winer. Peter Baynham adapted Steve Gordon's old story. —*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 4/25/11) (In wide release.)

AT 5 SHRUOGBURY: PART I This comically tense and flavorless adaptation of Ayn Rand's bombastic magnum opus delivers her simplistic nostrums with sugar self-satisfaction. The story is set in 2016 in a dystopian America beset by economic depression and a new oil crisis, which is the pretext for rendering rail travel—the core of the novel's plot—newly central. The railway heeds Dagney Taggart (Taylor Schilling) seeks to revitalize the family's business—and the nation's economy—by laying rails made of an untested new alloy developed by the metallurgical baron Hank Rearden (Grant Bowler), while both titans are tied down and pecked at by parasites from the government, organized labor, the media, and even the scientific establishment. Meanwhile, a prophetic masked avenger packs many of the country's great industrialists off to his compound in the hope of fueling a "second Renaissance." The preening resentment of the smart social misfit finds its fantasy fulfillment, as Rand's flamboyant porboiler intensity (and her fascination with the authority of the great loner) gives rise to a titillating know-nothing: the words "union" and "guild" are the pretexts for sneers and smears, and an unintentional howler of a business plan may give rise to a new, Tarzan-style pickup line: "My metal, your railways." Directed by Paul Johansson. —*Richard Brody* (In wide release.)

CONSEQUENCES

A horrific 2004 bus accident in western China is the starting point for the director Ying Liang's masterfully conceived, quietly sardonic, and incisively analytical twenty-minute film about the official response to the tragedy. A TV camera crew and a perky reporter show up at a garbage-strewn alley—one part of which has been cleaned up to host a funerary display—where local officials are scheduled to pay their respects and offer their support to an elderly woman, "Grandma" Chen, who lost her husband and son in the accident. The carefully choreographed photo op—in which the mayor mouths the rhetoric of democratic humility while the old woman's monosyllabic rigidity (and her seething quarters) suggest her imperceptible resignation—is interrupted by the arrival of a man who is being forced out of his house by the authorities. Ying ingeniously and skillfully frames and stages these events in a single, lengthy, tableau-like shot which distills the action to its stark lines of power; the TV director's name, Mao, lets viewers know who, in Ying's view, is still pulling the strings. In Mandarin. —*R.B.* (Museum of the Moving Image; April 30.)

THE CONSPIRATOR

After the slaying of President Lincoln, Mary Surratt (Robin Wright) is arrested and charged for her alleged part in the conspiracy. Robert Redford's solemn, striving film, written by James D. Solomon, leaves open the question of Surratt's innocence or guilt, what attracts Redford's attention and ire is the travesty of justice that she was forced to undergo. (If you look at the military tribunal that sat in judgment on her case, in lieu of a jury, and find yourself thinking of Guantanamo, then the movie has done its duty.) James McAvoy plays Surratt's defense lawyer, who shifts from skepticism to fervor without becoming an interesting character himself; more fun is to be had in the minor, more serpentine roles, such as the smiling prosecutor (Danny Huston) and the Secretary of War (Kevin Kline), who orchestrates a vengeance campaign against the accused. For some reason, Redford elects to soften the virtuous and wicked alike, rinsing them in the kind of gentle light that we associate with shampoo commercials; only at the end, with the harsh monstrosity of a multiple hanging, is reality restored. With Tom Wilkinson. —*Anthony Lane* (4/18/11) (In wide release.)

GREY MATTER

In the brisk, luminous serenity of middle-class Kigali, Balthazar (Hervé Kenyeni), a wry, intense young Rwandan filmmaker with a bookshelf full of Western classics and a head full of Western movies, prepares to make his first feature film, come what may, and muses about it into the lens of his video camera.

This is the setup of the young Rwandan director Kivu Ruhorahoza, who offers a searing political view of the minor metropolis's cultural modernity and modest prosperity. He shifts from Balthazar to clips of the film Balthazar is making—which, despite the displeasure of the authorities, who want to promote their own policies, turns out to be a devastating reflection of the horrific memories of recent massacres and the subsequent trail of grisly discoveries that have resulted. Ruhorahoza reveals the quietly terrifying depiction of violence-induced madness to be the obverse of the policy of calculated, forward-looking oblivion; his brilliant ending distills the paradoxes of normalcy atop a volcano of blood into a single, stinging shot. In Kinyarwanda and French. —*R.B.* (Tribeca Film Festival; April 27 and April 30.)

HANNA

An entertainingly nutty action thriller from the director Joe Wright. Hanna (Saoirse Ronan), raised in the frozen woods of northern Finland as a super-warrior by her father (Eric Bana), enters the world and attracts the interest of a C.I.A. agent (Cate Blanchett) who wants her dead. The two women stalk each other all over North Africa and Germany. The geography of the movie is bizarre—an intentional joke—and Wright mostly has a good time with the action scenes (his specialty is long-lasting shots in difficult spaces). At moments, the movie becomes a kind of pleasantly meandering travelogue—in Morocco, it pauses for a flamenco performance by a travelling Spanish troupe. With Olivia Williams, as an aging free spirit, and Jessica Barden, as her chirpy, pop-culture-besotted daughter. —*D.D.* (4/25/11) (In wide release.)

IN A BETTER WORLD

Anton (Mikael Persbrandt) and his wife, Marianne (Trine Dyrholm), are doctors. Much of his time is spent in Africa, where he tends the sick under harsh and even dangerous conditions; she remains at home in Denmark. Now separated, they have two sons, one of whom, Elias (Markus Rygaard), is badly bullied at school—a crisis that endures until a new boy, Christian (William Jøhnk Nielsen), arrives, stands up for him, and pulls a knife on the persecutor. At no point does Susanne Bier's film stray far from the borders of violence, whether it's the violence of disease, of calculated payback, or simply of insufferable feeling. By and large, the children in the movie cleave instinctively to an Old Testament view of wrongs inflicted and answered, whereas most of the adults, who seem at once weaker and more disciplined, subscribe, at least in theory, to Christian forgiveness. The result verges perilously close to the programmatic, ever more so as the plot proceeds, and there are scenes where we seem to be observing a moral demonstration as much as a drama; yet the movie does retain grip and grace, and the performances—by the child actors, in particular—quicken the pulse of life, even in their obsession with death. The winner of this year's Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. In Danish. —*A.L.* (4/4/11) (In limited release.)

INSIDIOUS

For their third film, the duo behind the classic shocker "Saw"—the director James Wan and the screenwriter Leigh Whannell—return to their indie roots, with a low-budget, quickly produced shock fest about the haunting of an affluent couple (Patrick Wilson and Rose Byrne) and their young children. Wan and Whannell have, in effect, ripped pages from the "Poltergeist" playbook and stripped horror formulas down to old-style gothic scares. There's no gore here, just some frightening images, impeccable sound design, and gleeful, over-the-top pounding of piano chords. The well-wrought tension unwinds a bit toward the end, and the film gets busier than it should be, but there are some good moments in this creep show. —*Bruce Dines* (In wide release.)

MEET'S CUTOFF

Three families, with only a few wagons and oxen as possessions, head west in the high desert in 1845, led by a garrulous but evasive tall-tale artist named Stephen Meek (Bruce Greenwood), who may or may not be taking them to a beautiful valley in Oregon. When they capture a lone and unhappy Indian (Ron Rondeaux), Meek wants to kill him, but Emily (Michelle Williams)—one of the wives, a woman of strong, steady character—protects the Indian, who just might bring them to a lake or a river. The jour-

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK DANCE OLYMPICS

Most "Don Quixote" ballets are pretty stupid, and the Bolshoi version, remotely descended from the 1869 original, is stupider than most. The plot, which has little to do with the man of La Mancha, is often



incomprehensible, and when you can understand it, you wish you couldn't. Also, the Russians always lavish on this ballet their famously corny acting. Everyone is a fiery fellow or a saucy señorita. Nevertheless, "Don Quixote" has a jolly score, by Ludwig Minkus, and because so little time is taken up with drama, the piece offers more opportunities for big-time bravura than probably any other ballet in the world. On April 28, IFC Center will show a video of a performance that was given in Moscow in March. One always hesitates to recommend a film of a ballet not made for film—there is no art less transferrable to the technological media—but the draw of this show is its stars, Natalia Osipova and Ivan Vasiliev, the two premier spitfires of today's Bolshoi. They say it takes ten years to make a ballet dancer. Here you can see why.

—Joan Acocella

ney from nowhere to nowhere becomes an absurdist quest, as if John Ford had been overtaken along the trail by Samuel Beckett. The director, Kelly Reichardt ("Wendy and Lucy"), moves us from the grandiosity of Western myth to the bone-wearying stress of mere existence. She gives us a new kind of feminist and materialist realism, with an emphasis on repetitive work, much of it done by the women. It's a pleasureless, anti-sensuous aesthetic, but the movie, in its thorny, grudging way, is stirring, with many startling details.—D.D. (4/11/11) (In limited release.)

THE PRINCESS OF MONTPIERRE

Some of the most satisfying scenes in the French director Bertrand Tavernier's epic consist of men and women galloping across the picture-book landscapes of sixteenth-century France—wide-open plains with a gray stone medieval castle nestled on a distant hill. The movie, based on a 1662 story by Madame de La Fayette, dramatizes the rivalries among Catholic dukes and princes as they fight the Protestants in the interminable religious wars of the time. When not hacking and hewing, the young men vie to get into bed with the most beautiful young woman in France, the heiress Marie (Mélanie Thierry), who has orange-gold hair and (much exposed) alabaster breasts. Though the movie is often powerful and sexy, it's also opaque at its center. Marie swings back and forth between mute obedience to her husband and an active determination to satisfy her desires, and we can't tell if she is torn by the uncertainties of a woman's role at the time or whether Thierry is merely an inexpressive actress. With Grégoire Leprince-Ringuet, Gaspard Ulliel, and, as Marie's elderly admirer, who cares for her mind and soul as well as her body, Lambert Wilson. In French.—D.D. (4/25/11) (In wide release.)

SOURCE CODE

A beautifully made, suspenseful techno-thriller about a dead man who tries to save Chicago from nuclear destruction. Colter Stevens (Jake Gyllenhaal), an Army

pilot who went down with his Black Hawk in Afghanistan, has his life extended by means of "source code" (don't even dream of asking), and, for exactly eight minutes at a time, he's sent back, again and again, to a commuter train that's heading for Chicago with a terrorist aboard. How, you may ask, is it possible that this movie isn't ridiculous? It isn't ridiculous because everything that happens on the train is utterly realistic. The movie is a formally disciplined piece of work, a triumph of movie syntax, made with a sense of rhythm and pace, and Gyllenhaal, who is always good at conveying anxiety, gives Stevens's desperation a comic edge—he reminds us that the situation that the character finds himself in is strange beyond belief, and his amusement as an actor includes in the fun. With Michelle Monaghan, as a fellow-commuter, and Vera Farmiga and Jeffrey Wright, as Stevens's military handlers. Very ably directed by Duncan Jones; Ben Ripley, obviously drawing on Philip K. Dick's stories and on "Groundhog Day," wrote the screenplay.—D.D. (4/11/11) (In wide release.)

STAKE LAND

Fans of Cormac McCarthy's "The Road" will find much to enjoy in this sombre and nerve-wracking postapocalyptic horror film, directed and co-written by Jim Mickle. The story is centered on a Southern teen-age boy (Connor Paolo) who, after his family is killed by blood-sucking flesh eaters, is taken under the wing of a man called Mister (the co-writer Nick Damici) and learns the art of a good staking. Together they travel north in search of a safe haven. The performances are terrific; Damici has a craggy, commanding Charles Bronson-like authority, and Paolo, though sensitive, gives his character open to tougher, more violent possibilities. The mayhem is beautifully composed, and, as the pair travels through small towns filled with survivors and marauding bands of killers, the film's rural, disembowelled landscape turns nature itself into an enemy.—B.D. (IFC Center)

TWO-LANE BLACKTOP

An "On the Road" with drag racers, starring James Taylor and the Beach Boys' Dennis Wilson as a laconic team known only as, respectively, "the Driver" and "the Mechanic." Laurie Bird is a rambling gal called "the Girl," and Warren Oates is the enigmatic "G.T.O.," who, of course, drives a G.T.O. He's on a quest to gain some existential traction after a crackup in his life. When G.T.O. crosses paths once too often with Taylor and Wilson's customized 1955 Chevy, his paranoia and competitiveness lead him to race the Taylor-Wilson team from New Mexico to D.C., with the winner getting the losing car. The director, Monte Hellman, shot this 1971 movie in bracing natural light and wide-open Techniscope. It's essentially a mood piece, about men in the grip of a narrow obsession that allows them to pass unscathed through a small-town, pre-mall America, which Hellman catches with an eye and ear for sloth, distrust, and parochial allegiances. Oates's performance makes the film more than a mere lyric ramble: his Beat and beat-up aura is perfect for the character, and no one stumbles along or passes out better than he.—Michael Sragow (Anthology Film Archives; April 30 and May 2)

Also Playing

THE BANG BANG CLUB: In limited release. **INCENDIES:** In limited release. **WATER FOR ELEPHANTS:** In wide release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—The films of Rudy Wurlitzer. April 29 at 7:30 and May

THEY'RE FOR CAPTURING SMILES



1 at 4:30; "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid" (1973, Sam Peckinpah). The April 29 screening will be followed by a Q. & A. with the screenwriter Wurlitzer and the musician Will Oldham ♦ April 30 at 5:30 and May 2 at 7: "Two-Lane Blacktop" (†). ♦ April 30 at 8 and May 2 at 9:15: "Glen and Randa" (1971, Jim McBride), followed by a discussion with Wurlitzer and the director Robert Downey, Sr. ♦ May 1 at 7: Short-film program, including "Keep Busy" (1975, Wurlitzer and Robert Frank). ♦ May 1 at 9:15 and May 3 at 7: "Walker" (1987, Alex Cox). ♦ May 3 at 9: "Candy Mountain" (1988, Wurlitzer and Frank).

BAM CINÉMATEK

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—The films of Kaneto Shindo. All films are in Japanese. April 27 at 6:50 and April 28 at 4:30 and 9:15: "The Naked Island" (1960). ♦ April 29 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Kuronoko" (1968). ♦ April 30 at 6:50 and 9:15 and May 1 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Onibaba" (1964). ♦ May 2 at 7: "Postcard" (2010). ♦ May 3 at 6:50: "Mother" (1963). ♦ May 3 at 9:15: "The Ditch" (1954).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—The films of W. C. Fields. April 27 at 1, 4, 7, and 10: "If I Had a Million" (1932, Ernst Lubitsch and Norman Taurog, et al.). ♦ April 27 at 2:40, 5:40, and 8:40: "Tillie and Gus" (1933, Francis Martin). ♦ April 28 at 2:40, 7:20, and 10:30: "The Old Fashioned Way" (1934, William Beaudine). ♦ April 28 at 1, 4:10, and 8:50: "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" (1934, Taurog). ♦ April 28 at 6: "So Your Old Man" (1926, Gregory La Cava; silent). ♦ April 29 at 1, 3:50, 6:40, and 9:30: "International House" (1933, Edward Sutherland). ♦ April 29 at 2:30, 5:20, and 8:10: "Million Dollar Legs" (1932, Edward Cline). ♦ April 30 at 2:30, 5:30, and 9:30: "The Bank Dick" (1940, Cline). ♦ April 30 at 1, 4, and

7: "Never Give a Sucker an Even Break" (1941, Cline). ♦ May 1 at 1:20: "Running Wild" (1927, La Cava; silent). ♦ May 1-2 at 2:45, 6, and 9:15: "My Little Chickadee" (1939, Cline). ♦ May 1 at 4:20 and 7:35 and May 2 at 1:05 and 4:20: "You Can't Cheat an Honest Man" (1939, George Marshall). ♦ May 2 at 7:35: "It's the Old Army Game" (1926, Sutherland; silent). ♦ May 3 at 1:30, 4:15, 7, and 9:45: "Six of a Kind" (1934, Leo McCarey). ♦ May 3 at 2:50, 5:35, and 8:20: "You're Telling Me" (1934, Eric C. Kenton).

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (212-875-5610)—The films of Edith Carlat. All films are in Norwegian. April 29 at 12:45 and 6:45: "Death Is a Caress" (1949). ♦ April 29 at 4:40 and May 1 at 2: "Damage Shot" (1951). ♦ May 3 at 2 and 8:40: "The Wayward Girl" (1959). ♦ May 4 at 3: "Lend Me Your Wife" (1958).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

22 East 60th St. (212-355-6100)—Through May 31: "Moroccan Cinema." May 3 at 12:30, 4, and 7:30: "Casa Negra" (2008, Nour Eddine Lakhamar; in Arabic).

IFC CENTER

323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—The films of Akira Kurosawa. April 29-May 1 at 11 A.M.: "Sanjuro" (1962; in Japanese). ♦ "Baller in Cinema." April 28 at 3: "Don Quixote" (2007). ♦ "Stranger Than Fiction." May 3 at 8: "We Still Live Here" (2010, Alma Makepeace).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"An Auteurist History of Film." April 27-29: "The Grapes of Wrath" (1940, John Ford). ♦ Through June 4: The films of Dziga Vertov. Except where noted, all films are silent. April 27 at 4: "Kinodelja," Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, and 21-25 (1918). Preceded by archival interviews with Vertov. ♦ April

27 at 6: "Kinodelja," Nos. 31-35 (1919) and "Kino-Pravda [excerpts]" (1930s). ♦ April 28 at 7: "The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty" (1927, Esfir Shub). ♦ April 29 at 7 and April 30 at 4: "Kino-Pravda No. 23" (1925) and "Stride, Soviet!" (1926). ♦ April 30 at 7: "Three Songs of Lenin" (1934/38; in Russian). ♦ May 1 at 2: "A Sixth Part of the World" (1926). ♦ May 1 at 4:30: "Moscow" (1926, Mikhail Kaufman and Ilya Kopalin).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Tales from the New Chinese Cinema." All films are in Mandarin. April 29 at 7 and May 1 at 5: "Thomas Mao" (2010, Zhu Wen) and "21G" (2010, Sun Xun). ♦ April 30 at 2: "Oxhide II" (2009, Liu Jiajin). ♦ April 30 at 5: "Disorder" (2009, Huang Weikai) and "Condolences" (†). ♦ April 30 at 7: "Single Man" (2010, Hao Jie). ♦ May 1 at 2: "City of Life and Death" (2009, Lu Chuan). ♦ May 1 at 7:15: "Winter Vacation" (2010, Li Hongqi).

92Y TRIBECA

200 Hudson St. (212-601-1000)—"Electronic Dreams: Giorgio Moroder." April 28 at 7: "Giorgio Moroder's Metropolis" (1927/1984, Moroder and Fritz Lang). ♦ April 29 at 7:30: "D.C. Cab" (1983, Joel Schumacher). ♦ April 29 at 9:45: "Electric Dreams" (1984, Steve Barron). ♦ April 30 at 7: "American Gigolo" (1980, Paul Schrader), introduced by the director and followed by a party.

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—"Cabaret Cinema." April 29 at 9:30: "Wild Strawberries" (1957, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), introduced by the writer Sandro Veronesi.

TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

Films will be screened at a variety of venues. For complete program information, visit tribecafilm.com. (646-502-5296)—April 27 at 2:30 and April 30 at 10: "Bombay Beach" (2011, Alma Har'el). ♦

OR CREATING THEM



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REALIZE THE POTENTIAL™



April 27 at 6 and April 30 at 9:30: "Grey Mar-
ter" (†), April 27 at 9:30: "The Journals of Musan"
(2010, Park Janghuh, in Korean), April 27 at 9
and April 28 at 3: "The Ballad of Genesis and Lady
Jaye" (2011, Marie Losier).

READINGS AND TALKS

THE POETRY PROJECT

Edwin Torres, Anne Tardos, Nicole Peyrafitte,
Franklin Bruno, David Shapiro, Bree Brenton, Julie
Patton, Madeline Gins, Richard Hell, Anna Wil-
liams, Sharon Mesmer, and other poets and mu-
sicians gather to celebrate the publication of John
Ashbery's translation of Arthur Rimbaud's "Il-
luminations." (St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave.
at 10th St. 212-674-0910. April 27 at 8.)

SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

Jerry Robinson, a legendary comic-book artist who,
among many other accomplishments, helped cre-
ate key parts of the "Batman" series, talks about his
life and work. A colorful biography, "Jerry Rob-
inson: Ambassador of Comics," was published last
year, and his 1974 classic, "The Comics: An Illus-
trated History of Comic Strip Art," has recently
been reissued in an updated edition. (209 E. 23rd
St. 212-592-2010. April 28 at 7.)

"LIVE FROM THE NYPL"

The surgeon and *New Yorker* contributor Atul Ga-
wande talks with Paul Holdengraber, of the New
York Public Library, about modern medicine and
mortality. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at
42nd St. 917-275-6975. April 28 at 7.)

"WORDTHEATRE LIT BY LULU"

The Los Angeles-based reading series "Word Theatre,"
which has changed the name of its spring series

slightly and has picked up sponsorship by the on-
line publishing outfit Lulu.com, presents the actors
Par de la Huerta, Nicki Micheaux, and Roger
Gueneuvr Smith, who will read stories by Patricia
Engle, Brad Watson, and John Edgar Wideman, all
of whom will be on hand to discuss their work
and answer questions. (Soho House New York,
29-35 Ninth Ave. For tickets and more information,
call 310-915-5150, or visit wordtheatre.com.
May 1 at 6.)

CUNY GRADUATE CENTER

Bill Kelly, the president of the City University of
New York Graduate Center, talks with Calvin Tom-
kins, a longtime art critic for this magazine, and
Tomkins's wife, Dede Kazanjian, who is also an
arts writer. (Elisabeth Recital Hall, 365 Fifth Ave.,
at 34th St. For information about reservations,
which are required, visit gc.cuny.edu/events, or call
212-817-8215. May 2 at 6:30.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

BLESSING OF THE BIKES

Bicycle riding in New York City is not easy. There
are the usual cars, trucks, and pedestrians to avoid,
of course, but lately cyclists have to contend with
police officers on a ticketing spree (riders have lately
been hit with summonses for going too fast in Cen-
tral Park, though the police did apologize) as well
as big-league legal threats (a group that the New
York Times has identified as having close ties to the
wife of Senator Charles E. Schumer has sued to
remove a bike lane on Prospect Park West, in
Brooklyn). Good thing there is the Blessing of the
Bikes, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. This
annual event attracts riders of all religious persua-

sions, who wheel their bikes into the center of the
Cathedral for a brief, but hopefully powerful, bless-
ing. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. theblessingofthe-
bikes.com. April 30 at 9:30 A.M.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

The prints-and-multiples extravaganza continues.
On April 28, Swann gets into the game with a
wide-ranging sale offering everything from engrav-
ings from the fifteenth century by Dürer to a por-
tfolio of more than a hundred Biblical etchings by
Marc Chagall. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.) ♦
Christie's auctions off a private collection of reason-
ably priced ceramics by Pablo Picasso on April
27, before moving on to musical instruments on
April 29; the latter sale is led by a violin, crafted in
Pozzani in the mid-eighteenth century by the
renowned luthier G. B. Guadagnini. (20 Rocke-
feller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ Sothe-
by's sale of prints (April 29) features a group of
Matisse works, including a seductive lithograph
from 1925, "Grande Odaïssée à la Culotte Baya-
dère," as well as a wonderfully caustic Russian Con-
structivist poster by El Lissitzky entitled "Beat the
Whites with the Red Wedge." Then the house holds
the first of the season's big sales of Impressionist
and modern art (May 3); the brightest star here
is a Picasso from the nineteen-thirties, "Femmes
Lisant," a characteristically sumptuous, serene de-
piction of his lover Marie-Thérèse Walter, shown
here reading with a friend. (York Ave. at 72nd St.
212-606-7000.)

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goingson, and follow us on Twitter (tmygoingson).



ON THE HORIZON

CLASSICAL MUSIC UP AND AWAY

May 5 and May 11

The Church of the
Ascension in Greenwich
Village celebrates the
installation of its new
Manton Memorial
Organ, which was made
in France, with a solo
recital by Jon Gillock
and a choral concert.
(voicesofascension.org.)

THE THEATRE MIRROR IMAGES

May 13
Carey Mulligan, who made
her New York stage debut

in 2008 in "The Seagull,"
stars in an Atlantic Theatre
Company production of
"Through a Glass Darkly,"
Jenny Worton's adaptation
of Ingmar Bergman's
1961 film. David Leveaux
directs, at New York
Theatre Workshop.
(212-279-4200.)

ART GREEK TRANSLATION

May 17–Nov. 13
In "Historic Images of
the Greek Bronze Age:
The Reproductions of
E. Gilliéron & Son," the
Met exhibits early-twentieth-
century watercolors and
three-dimensional replicas—
made directly from the

originals—of art works
from excavations of Minoan
Crete and Mycenaean
Greece. (212-535-7710.)

MOVIES GREEN SCREEN


May 20–June 3
The actor Gabriel Byrne
is the guiding spirit behind
MOMA's retrospective
of Irish cinema. The
starting point is John
Ford's 1952 classic, "The
Quiet Man"; the series
includes Sé Merry Doyle's
new documentary about
the film's legacy (which
incorporates interviews
with Peter Bogdanovich,
Martin Scorsese, and its
co-star, Maureen O'Hara),

as well as John Huston's
"The Dead," adapted from
a short story by James Joyce.
(212-708-9480)

ABOVE AND BEYOND WATER SPORTS

May 21
The Hudson River
Pageant, an afternoon
celebrating the estuary,
features a parade along
the waterfront from
Vesey to Horatio Streets,
complete with fifteen-foot
sea-creature puppets, as
well as an oyster planting
and a live-fish release.
(earthcelebrations.com.)

*The Hudson River Pageant,
on the New York waterfront.*



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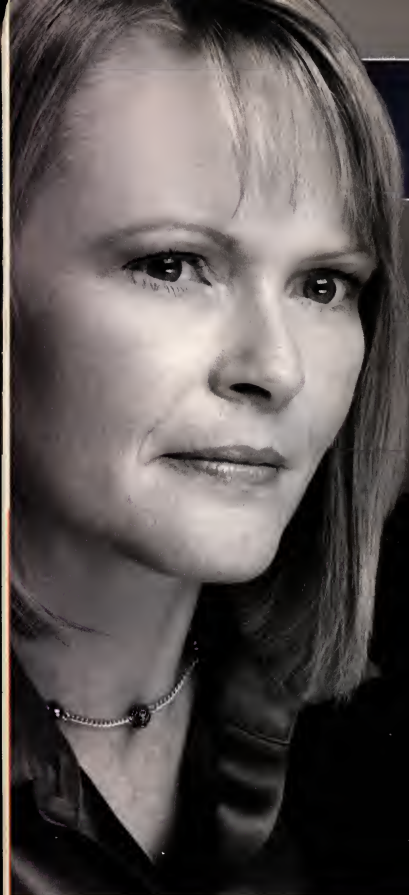


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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT TRUMPERY



The Presidential candidacy as joke is a perennial sideshow along the raucous midway of the American political carnival. Sometimes the candidate—Will Rogers (1928), Gracie Allen (1940), Pat Paulsen (1968 through 1996), Stephen Colbert (2008)—is a fully qualified professional humorist. Sometimes he, or it, is an animal, barnyard (Pegasus, the Yippie mascot, 1968) or cartoon (Pogo, the comic-strip possum, 1952). Sometimes—like Lar Daly, the Chicago eccentric who, in 1956 and three times thereafter, campaigned in an Uncle Sam suit—he appears to be in on the joke. Sometimes he doesn't. The first two or three times that Harold Stassen, a talented progressive who at age thirty-one had been elected governor of Minnesota, sought the Republican nomination, his candidacy was taken seriously, and rightly so. By the fifth or sixth time, he was a punch line. By the ninth—in 1992, when he was eighty-five—the poignancy of it all muted the laughter.

The joke candidate of the present moment partakes of many of the qualities of those who have gone before, but the precursor he most strikingly resembles, perhaps, is the late Bishop

Homer A. Tomlinson. Like Bishop Tomlinson, the 1952, 1960, 1964, and 1968 Presidential nominee of the Theocratic Party, Donald Trump is a repeat aspirant, having previously proclaimed his readiness to occupy the nation's highest office in 1988 and 2000. Tomlinson lived in a little frame house in Queens; Trump grew up in a big house (some two dozen rooms, twenty-foot Georgian columns on the portico) in the same borough of New York. Like Trump, Tomlinson had a business background: before joining the pastorate, he was C.E.O. of his own advertising agency. Like the Bishop, the Donald is a person of faith. Tomlinson was top man in a spin-off of the Church of God, part of the Pentecostal movement. Trump is a Christian, too. "I think that the Bible

certainly is—it is *the book*," Trump told an interviewer for the Christian Broadcasting Network recently. "I'm a Presbyterian. And you know, I've had a good relationship with the church over the years." But the decisive similarity is a level of megalomania unusual even in people who consider themselves entitled to supreme power. Between elections, Bishop Tomlinson travelled the world with a portable throne, crowning himself, among other things, King of Belgium, King of Ethiopia, Tsar of Russia, and, finally, King of the World. Trump thinks no less highly of himself.

Tomlinson's delusions were harmless, and not widely shared. Not so Trump's. In the weeks since his proto-campaign began, Trump has talked of many things. Of energy policy, for example: "We need to seize Iraq's oil fields." Of China: "Our enemies." Of abortion rights: "I'm pro-life." (He used to be pro-choice, but, as one of his top aides noted the other day, "people change their positions all the time, the way they change their wives.") Of health policy: "I will fight to end Obamacare." (He used to be for a universal single-payer system, but that was then.) Of taxes: "It's part of my speech. No new taxes." The main thing he has talked of, though, is President Obama's birthplace. The President was born on August 4, 1961, at the Kapi'olani Medical Center, in Honolulu, Hawaii. Trump, however, believes—or says he



believes—that it might have happened elsewhere. Africa, maybe.

The Donald Trump birther tour took wing on March 17th, via an interview with ABC's Ashleigh Banfield, taped aboard his private Boeing 727. "The reason I have a little doubt, just a little, is because he grew up and nobody knew him," Trump said. "The whole thing is very strange." "You mock me," he told Joe Scarborough, of MSNBC, on April 1st, adding, wildly, "but his own grandmother says he was born in Kenya and says she was there." By April 7th, "a little doubt" on ABC had become "a big possibility" on NBC. After two more weeks of this sort of thing, Trump published an op-ed piece in the April 20th *USA Today*. "Sadly," he wrote—five sentences after demanding that Obama "provide his birth certificate for forensic review"—"the press has en masse chosen toglom onto but one of the myriad issues I have discussed and would tackle as President.... I have spoken my piece on this issue." Time to move on? Uh, no. The next morning, on CNN, Trump boasted, as he had before, that his own private investigators are on the case, and that "at a certain point in time" he "will be revealing some interesting things." The interviewer, Ali Velshi, urged him to admit that Obama was in fact born where he was born. "It's possible that he was, but there's a big question as to whether or not he was," Trump replied. "When I started, two months ago, I thought he was. Every day that goes by, I think less and less that he was born in the United States."

For Trump, thinking less and less seems to be working more and more from week to week—or so the opinion polls, which didn't start asking Republican voters about him until a couple of months ago, suggest. In a February

Newsweek/Daily Beast poll, he came in fourth. Early in April, an NBC/Wall Street *Journal* poll had him in second place, tied with Mike Huckabee, behind Mitt Romney. By midmonth, both Gallup and CNN had him in a tie with Huckabee for the top spot. And in at least one other poll—by a firm whose client list leans Democratic, to be sure—Trump is No. 1.

No wonder. According to the latest CBS News/*New York Times* poll, only a third of the Republican rank and file believe that Barack Obama is, in the Constitution's phrase, a "natural born Citizen"—and therefore eligible to be President of the United States. Few of their party's national leaders have embraced the opposite view as fervently as Trump has. Most of them have duly stated that the President is an American. But their demurrals too often come wrapped in equivocation. They say they *think* he was born here. Or they say they take him at his word. Or they warn that "the issue"—which is no issue at all, not in the sense of being a matter of opinion rather than a matter of fact—is a distraction from more important problems.

The dismaying truth is that birtherism is part of a larger pattern of rejection of reality that has taken hold of intimidating segments of one of the two political parties that alternate in power in our governing institutions. It is akin to the view that global warming is a hoax, or that the budget can be balanced through spending cuts alone, or that contraception causes abortion, or that evolution is just another theory, on a par with the theory that the earth is six thousand years old. Or, for that matter, that Bishop Tomlinson was ever King of the World. "The world laughs at us," Donald Trump said the other day. "They won't be laughing if I'm elected Pres-

ident." That they won't; anyway, he won't be. But they are laughing now. As is well known, gallows humor is an excellent way to keep from crying.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

DEPT. OF LISTS CANON FODDER



When allegations surfaced that details in Greg Mortenson's memoir "Three Cups of Tea" had been fabricated, some reports noted that the book, a best-seller about doing good works in Central Asia, is "required reading" for U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. These reports were referring to the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center's Pre-Deployment Afghanistan Reading List, which (in addition to cultural field guides and counter-insurgency manuals) recommends novels such as Khaled Hosseini's "The Kite Runner" and George MacDonald Fraser's "Flashman."

Reading has been a part of military life since Alexander the Great slept with a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow. When the United States Military Academy was founded, in 1802, John Adams advocated an ambitious reading program for officers. "I wished to turn the Minds of such as were capable of it to that great Source of Information," he wrote. During the Second World War, the Council on Books in Wartime printed more than a hundred and twenty million paperbacks for distribution to American soldiers. Touted as "weapons in the war of ideas," these Armed Services Editions ranged from "Tristram Shandy" and "Candido" to "My Antonia."

Harold Bloom, in "The Western Canon," described the culture's seminal books as possessing "strangeness, a mode of originality that either cannot be assimilated, or that so assimilates us that we cease to see it as strange." Today's military reading lists have a more pragmatic bent. Each major branch of the U.S. military has its own lists, usually targeted to specific ranks; the Marines alone maintain dozens of different reading lists, and the Army has at least six, overseen by such entities as the Chief of Staff, the War Col-



"Gosh, guys, I'm excited. This is my first cabal."

lege Library, and the Center for Army Leadership. "Three Cups of Tea" appears on the Joint Forces Staff College Commandant's Professional Reading List and on the list of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force Professional Reading Program.

In terms of "strangeness," the Navy Professional Reading Program recommends, along with Melville's "Billy Budd," "Starship Troopers," the 1959 science-fiction novel about a war between mankind and an arachnoid species known as the Bugs. The self-help genre is well represented, too. Soldiers are encouraged to peruse "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" and Dale Carnegie's "How to Win Friends and Influence People." Race relations figure prominently. On a Navy list, alongside "When Affirmative Action Was White," is "Black Titan: A. G. Gaston and the Making of a Black American Millionaire."

Business writers like military metaphors, and the military seems fond of business titles. The U.S. Army General Officers Suggested Reading List has a section devoted to them which includes Nassim Taleb's "The Black Swan" and Chip and Dan Heath's "Made to Stick." The Navy list recommends "Freakonomics," by Stephen J. Dubner and Steven Levitt; "The Lexus and the Olive Tree," by Thomas Friedman; and "Moneyball," by Michael Lewis.

U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Zoltan Krompecher, who has served in Afghanistan and taught English at West Point, says that assembling reading lists is part of a broader effort by the U.S. military to help soldiers understand local cultures. "When you're going into uncharted territory, you want to know everything about that culture that you can," he said. "If I'm going out there and talking to an imam or a sheikh, I've got to demonstrate that I value his culture. Once you earn their trust, they'll help you with the bad guys." As for fiction, Krompecher called it "a way to understand or at least examine how others feel." He said, "Consider Henry from Stephen Crane's 'The Red Badge of Courage.' That fear of going into battle, when you're tasting your own mortality: How are you going to react? Are you going to run away? Soldiers can relate to that."

Harold Bloom agrees, at least about Crane. Reached by telephone in New Haven, he listened to a list of some of the

military's recommended titles, among them Kafka's "The Castle," "Catch-22," "The Tin Drum," "The Brothers Karamazov," and "Snow," by Orhan Pamuk.

"It's a very mixed bag," Bloom said. "The two surprising entries, really quite wonderful, are E. M. Forster's 'A Passage to India' and 'The Red Badge of Courage,' which is a considerable work of realization." He talked about a lecture he once gave at West Point, on Walt Whitman's "Drum-Taps," and found that the soldiers were "immensely open to what Whitman was doing."

What did he think about the inclusion of "Starship Troopers"?

"I can't take that seriously, I'm sorry," he said. "I suppose it's on the list because that's the world we're headed towards."

—Rolf Potts

THE PICTURES CLOTHES HORSE



The director Paul Feig was peacocking in a gray pin-striped suit (Ralph Lauren Purple Label), black double-monk-strap shoes (Santoni), black-framed eyeglasses (Gucci), and a don't-fuck-with-me watch (Panerai). He had mustered his Austin Powers mojo for a shopping expedition on the Upper East Side: nothing in his closet of more than fifty suits would do for this week's premiere of "Bridesmaids," a fizzy comedy he directed that stars Kristen Wiig (who co-wrote the screenplay) and a platoon of other actresses who play—spoiler alert—bridesmaids.

Feig created "Freaks and Geeks," television's most loved, least watched show, and has directed numerous episodes of "The Office," including Steve Carell's upcoming finale. A self-described geek from Mount Clemens, Michigan, whose childhood was a gauntlet of bullying, he is, against some odds, funny, and, against all odds, stylish. In addition to writing screenplays, memoirs, and young-adult novels—"I'm one of those douche bags who brings his laptop to a coffee shop and looks around at all the other douche bags, thinking, I bet your screenplays suck"—he's developing a fashion site, smartgent.com, which sorts clothes-

conscious men into three categories.

He ambled into the place where most beginners, those he calls "new gents," would look for a premiere suit (Barneys), glanced around the Rag & Bone display—all very mod—then spun on his heel. "I can't pull that off anymore, at forty-eight," he said. "You have to beware of old head/young suit: I'm the equivalent of the girl who's hot from the back, and you come to the front and she's hideous. When I finally get rich enough, I'll have a tuba player who walks around with me and blows a sad note for all the let-down ladies"—he issued a mournful *wub-wub*. "Like getting zonked on Let's Make a Deal."

Feig strode uptown to the "ultra gent" temple he'd never before dared to enter (Tom Ford). Plunging in with some tepidation, he eyed a gray-striped number, then ran his hand softly over a black-and-white Glen plaid. "So classic," he said. "Timeless, elegant, Gatsbyesque. I remember seeing Hamm"—Jon Hamm, who plays a cad in "Bridesmaids"—"in this suit at a party, and thinking, That is a gorgeous suit." The implicit comparison prompted him to flee the store. "If I'd stayed any longer," he explained, on the sidewalk, "the salesmen would all have started talking about me, and then one would have come over and said, 'Sir, Mr. Ford has called and he will not allow you to buy the suit—he doesn't like the image it would put forth.'"

Two blocks north, Feig turned into the place where "smart gents" like him, who wear suits every day, feel deliciously welcome (Ralph Lauren). A salesman popped up, said, "Lovely suit—Purple Label," and handed him a glass of sparkling water. Feig drained it and milled about, mentioning a white suit that he'd seen at their store in London—"Do you have it here? No? Well, it might be too Tom Wolfe-y, anyway." As the salesman hovered, Feig folded his arms and told the story of how his habit of dressing up began, in 2000. "I was tired of pitching ideas in jeans on the low couch, talking up to all these guys in suits. So I decided to dress like the enemy, and the *minute* I did it, the minute I wore a three-piece suit to pitch a show to Fox, was the exact minute this secret memo went around: 'It's casual from now on.' I guess they thought, If we don't wear suits, we won't be suits. Wrong!"

He said that his interest in style came from his mother, who gave him a sub-

scription to *GQ* and bought him his first three-piece suit (Pierre Cardin) when he was eleven. "I wore it everywhere—I remember wearing it to the grocery store, and these two women burst out laughing, and I thought, How dare you! Pearls before swine!" At this point in real time, the salesman decamped. Meanwhile, in memory, young Feig was acquiring platform shoes and a white suit, in homage to Steve Martin. "My father—who ran an Army-Navy store—went bananas, because he was all about functional clothing. Of course, he wore a suit and tie to work every day, so maybe I got the ethos from him. Though his was a polyester, carrying-boxes-in-from-the-loading-dock kind of suit."

After lunch and a fortifying Bellini at Harry Cipriani, Feig marched back into Tom Ford and bought the Glen plaid. "It's a rebirth issue, getting a suit for a premiere," he said. "I have to try something new, because my other films were total bombs." Then, in a third-act twist, he decided to order the white suit from Ralph Lauren and wear that to the premiere, rather than the Tom Ford, so as not to strobe the cameras with his vivid plaid pattern or make poor Jon Hamm eat his heart out.

—Tad Friend

CLOSEUP DEPT. HOCKEY GUYS



Last month, Howard Balter, a forty-five-year-old finance manager for the city of Vaughan, Ontario, submitted a comment to the Web page of the Broadway show "That Championship Season," starring Kiefer Sutherland and Chris Noth. "Just wanted to send a note to relate what I think are some interesting coincidences between your play and an annual hockey trip that I am a part of," it began. The play is about a reunion of middle-aged men in Scranton, Pennsylvania, on the twentieth anniversary of their having won a high-school basketball championship. Balter and his road-tripping pals were approaching an anniversary of their own: twenty years of shared hockey fandom. In his note, he stressed

the parallels: "The play: 4 guys and a coach who have known each other for a long time, including 2 brothers. Our trip: 4-5 guys who have known each other a long time, including 2 brothers. The play: based in Scranton, PA. Our trip: many stays in Scranton, PA." The group was headed to New York. The men had tickets to see the Devils, in Newark. They had



Kiefer Sutherland and Chris Noth

also bought tickets to a Saturday matinee.

The note charmed the play's producers, who thought it might be a nice idea to invite the hockey guys backstage, after the show, to meet their supposed fictional counterparts. A warmup lunch was arranged, at Sardi's. The road trippers were immediately recognizable by the Montreal Canadiens jersey that one of them was wearing. Before long, they began bickering, as old friends do. Michael Balter, Howard's older brother, mentioned having heard the Canadian anthem at the Flyers game, in Philadelphia, two nights before. "No, they didn't play it," the man in the jersey, whose name was Michael Polisuk, said.

"Yeah, they did."

"Did not," Howard Balter said.

And so on. They passed on coffee or dessert so that the elder Balter would have time to run out to the N.H.L. Store, on Sixth Avenue, before showtime. Then a waiter walked by carrying Baked Alaska for a neighboring table. "Oh, wow, we should have ordered that flaming dessert," Howard said.

They enjoyed the play, which presented a far grimmer and more contentious picture of male bonding. In a hospi-

ality room backstage, Kiefer Sutherland, a fellow-Canadian and hockey enthusiast, was the first to greet them. "Where do you guys play?" he asked.

"Uh, we don't play," Howard Balter said. "We watch."

"Oh."

Sutherland told them a story about having switched his fan allegiance from the Toronto Maple Leafs to the Canadiens because of a girl he used to date, and then moved along. Chris Noth appeared soon after. "All right, which guy's having the affair with the other guy's wife?" he asked, alluding to his character in the play, a philandering strip-mining tycoon. Joking, they all pointed to Polisuk, in the Montreal jersey. "And I guess you're all a bunch of drunks," Noth added. "So, is it twenty years now? For what team and where?"

"Any team, anywhere," Howard Balter said, causing Noth to furrow his brow in confusion.

"We all live in Toronto," Polisuk explained. "We went the first night to Buffalo. We saw the Sabres. Then we went to Philadelphia and we saw the Flyers. Last night we saw the Devils. And tonight—"

Noth cut him off. "But *your* team," he said. "Tell me, was it a high-school team, or—"

"We're not athletic," Howard Balter said.

"I thought you guys were a hockey team."

"We're hockey followers," Balter said, and extended his hand for a shake. "I'm Howard."

The comedian Jim Gaffigan, who plays the corrupt (and cuckolded) mayor of Scranton, was next to greet the touring Canucks. "I know nothing about hockey," he warned, and then corrected himself. "Actually, I was in a tiny indie film that was called 'No Sleep 'til Madison,' which was about a group of friends who travelled around watching the Wisconsin state hockey finals."

"Sort of like us," Michael Balter said.

"We don't play, we just watch," a road tripper named Danny added.

"No, these guys just watched, too," Gaffigan said.

"Well, that's us," Balter said.

"I'm not saying it's a great movie," Gaffigan said, eyeing a plate of fried chicken.

—Ben McGrath

THE FINANCIAL PAGE BITTER PILLS

Multitrillion-dollar piles of debt have a way of making people nervous, so it's not really surprising that Washington is now in the throes of budget-cutting hysteria. Republicans risked a government shutdown over a few billion dollars in spending cuts, and are now threatening to refuse to raise the government's debt ceiling. The ratings agency Standard & Poor's lowered its outlook on U.S. debt because of concerns about the long-term budget. And Barack Obama has been speaking of the need to eliminate two trillion dollars in federal spending in the next ten years. Yet, strange as it may sound, the federal government does not have a spending problem per se. What it has is a health-care problem. The cost of most budget items typically rises at a reasonable rate, if at all, but the cost of Medicare, Medicaid, and the tax subsidy for employer-provided insurance has been rising much faster than everything else: in the past forty years, Medicare costs increased 8.3 per cent annually. If they're not controlled, Medicare and Medicaid will eventually be by far our biggest expense. Preventing that is the key to getting our fiscal house in order.

Politicians usually shy away from big, difficult, long-term problems like this, but at the moment there are actually two genuinely different, and reasonably specific, visions of how to deal with the health-care problem. Representative Paul Ryan, a Republican, proposes a strikingly simple solution—basically, just giving seniors less money. He'd replace Medicare as we know it; the government, instead of insuring seniors directly, would give them a voucher that they would then use to buy private insurance. His plan saves money because the value of the vouchers would rise at a much slower rate than health-care costs themselves; as the years pass, the government's contribution to seniors' health-care spending would shrink. As a result, seniors would have to spend more and more of their income on private insurance and out-of-pocket expenses, or go without. Indeed, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that

Ryan's plan would actually increase the amount of money Americans spend on health care, since private insurers aren't as good at curbing costs as Medicare. But taxpayers would pay less.

The health-care bill that Congress passed last spring represents a different approach. It trims more than four hundred billion dollars from Medicare spending, and contains a host of initiatives designed to make the health-care system more efficient and effective. In line with that, it creates a body called the Independent Payment Advisory Board, which determines how much Medicare will spend annually. The American health-care system is riddled with waste and unnecessary and ineffective procedures. Rel-



ative to every other industrialized nation, we spend more and our health outcomes are no better (and often worse). In American medicine, supply often creates its own demand, and paying doctors on a fee-for-service basis encourages more high-cost procedures. The I.P.A.B., in conjunction with other cost-cutting provisions in the bill, would look to fix the skewed incentives that lead to overtreatment, bargain for better prices, and insure that we're spending our money more effectively. The Affordable Care Act is far from a perfect law, but the C.B.O. estimates that, if implemented as planned, it could cut the long-term deficit by more than a trillion dollars.

You'd think that a plan that might keep health-care costs down while also

improving care would get some love on the Hill. No chance. Last November, Republicans used the cost-cutting provisions as a club to bash Democrats for threatening to trim Medicare spending, and won the senior vote by a twenty-one-point margin. And now some Democrats are joining Republicans in trying to repeal the I.P.A.B. From Congress's point of view, there are three problems with the I.P.A.B. First, it may take spending decisions out of Congress's hands. Second, talk of restraining health-care costs sounds like rationing, which Americans hate. (That's why, as the debate over the Affordable Care Act progressed, Obama said less and less about "bending the cost curve.") Third, and most important, one person's "waste" is another person's "income"—the income of doctors, nurses, hospitals, drug companies, medical-technology makers. Discussions of health care in the U.S. usually focus on insurance companies, but, whatever their problems, they're not the main driver of health-care inflation: providers are. Hospital stays, MRI exams, drugs, and doctor's visits are simply more expensive here than they are elsewhere, and the fee-for-service structure insures that we use more of them, too. It's really just math: most of our health-care dollars go, in one way or another, to health-care providers, so if we want to restrain the growth of health-care spending, less money will have to go to them.

This makes a lot of people, and not just politicians, uncomfortable: people, on the whole, understandably like and trust doctors and hospitals. They want to be able to choose their own doctors, and don't want them to drop out of Medicare because the fees are too low. This is the fundamental dilemma: we're unhappy about the rising cost of health care, but we're also unhappy about what we would have to do to curb it. The ideal system, for most voters, would guarantee all seniors reasonable health care, stop the debt from getting out of control, and keep paying health-care providers as before. The problem is that you can only do two of those things at once. The debate between Ryan and Obama is a debate over which of the three we're willing to give up.

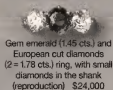
—James Surowiecki

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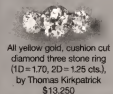
(platinum top, yellow gold back 1890-1900)



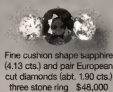
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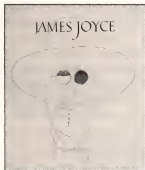
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LETTER FROM BRITAIN

HOLY MATRIMONY!

The Prince, the commoner, and the rest of us.

BY LAUREN COLLINS

This week, the sixty-two million subjects of the United Kingdom will mark the marriage of His Royal Highness Prince William Arthur Philip Louis of Wales, their future king, to Catherine Elizabeth Middleton, the captain of her high-school field-hockey team. They have been told that the event will be a "people's wedding," with a buffet and homeless youths in attendance. More realistically, it will be a feudal affair, bringing to mind the WikiLeaks cable about the North Caucasian oil baron who threw a three-day feast—boiled sheep, flying banknotes—to celebrate the marriage of his son. "Dagestani weddings are serious business," the diplomat wrote. "A forum for showing respect, fealty and alliance among families; the bride and groom themselves are little more than showpieces."

Weddings are a big deal in Great Britain, where "hen parties" and "stag dos" often involve vomiting on the street corners of Magaluf. The weddings of members of the Royal Family are particularly elaborate. The Church of England has issued a prayer ("God of all grace, friend and companion, look in favour upon William and Catherine") for the couple, who have been dating for eight years and are reportedly known to each other as Big Willy and Babykins. The Prime Minister has announced that he is throwing a street party—such parties are said to feature sausage rolls and cherryade—though it is unclear how he plans to "bring out the bunting," since his only neighbors on Downing Street are the Chief Whip and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The groom's grandmother has given the entire nation a day off. The groom's father has invited the P.R. chief of Audi, which supplies the family with luxury cars at cut-rate prices.

London, in the weeks leading up to the event, has become a company town. Everybody has a hustle, a plan to hitch his wagon to the royal cortège, which will

proceed from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey and, along the way, to two billion television viewers around the world. The ploys have been as amusing as their pretexts are flimsy. This spring, on the Web site Londonist, a recurring feature called "Desperate Royal Wedding Headlines" garnered a following. The first installment read, "CHORLEYWOOD KNITTER DESIGNS ROYAL WEDDING DRESS" (the gown was several inches high, and made of yarn), and "KATE MIDDLETON'S FORMER PIANO TEACHER WRITES SONG" (the piano teacher revealed that it is a duet, with the part honoring William played in a "majestic and very self-assured" E-flat, and Kate's part in "a completely different key, reflecting their different social standings"). William Hill, the bookmakers, was offering 7-4 odds that the length of Kate's train would be less than eight feet. A company called Guangdong Enterprises had designed a mug to commemorate "the fairytale romantic union of all centuries." It featured Kate Middleton and Prince Harry. A visitor to Londonist, or to London, could also learn that Kate has dropped two dress sizes since the engagement, eats foie gras, and is a fifteenth cousin of Ellen DeGeneres.

On a cloudy day in late March, Liz Jopling and Elaine Hawksworth—sisters from the coastal village of Burnham-on-Crouch—had taken the train in for a ladies' afternoon: cream tea and a "Will & Kate Royal Wedding Walking Tour." With them were their seventy-year-old mother, Rosemary Slaughter, who herself looked regal in a mauve duster coat. Their fellow-tourgoers were two women from Australia, a woman from New Zealand, and many international camerapeople, including a German with purple hair. The tour began at 17 Bruton Street (the birthplace of Queen Elizabeth II) and continued through Mayfair to such landmarks as a branch of the clothing chain Jigsaw (where Kate once

worked as an accessories buyer) and the Mahiki night club (Prince William and friends are partial to the Mahiki Treasure Chest, a £125 vat of rum, champagne, brandy, and peach liqueur). The outing was the sisters' gift to Rosemary for what is called, in Britain, Mothering Sunday. I asked the women what plans they had for the day of the wedding.

"Get stuck in in front of the telly, and not move all day!" Hawksworth replied.

"I cannot imagine anybody more perfect for him," Slaughter said, dreamily.

"Have you heard anything about Kate's hen night?" Hawksworth asked the tour guide.

Not long after the tour, I e-mailed Andy Walker, who was a security guard until November, when he became a full-time royal look-alike. I had seen him in the *Times Magazine*, posing in tweeds and a flat cap with a string of dead pheasants. He made a convincing ringer, even with a thatch of light-brown hair. (William's retreating perimeter is known as "the other Windsor crown.") I had hoped to ask him about his new career. He replied from his iPhone: "Thanks for your e-mail, due to the demand I'm charging £250 for such interviews."

Alexandra Shulman, the editor of British *Vogue*, had deemed the royal wedding a "perfect Marmite moment"—splitting the nation into equal camps of lovers and loathers. But, as a top-down patriotic initiative, the wedding seemed more like the converse of George W. Bush's war on terror: if you weren't against it, you were (at least tepidly) for it. On Mumsnet, a group of commentators fretted about what to do on the wedding day if "one is not exactly pro Royal family" or a committed enough skeptic to want to stay home. Oh, wave a miniature Union Jack, don't worry about it, seemed to be the consensus. Nicholas Witchell, the royal correspondent for

BBC television, told me, "I don't think wedding hysteria has really quite taken off in this country, certainly not to the extent that it has in the States." Witchell is known for having once had the impertinence to ask—at a press conference—what William and Harry thought of their father's impending marriage to Camilla Parker Bowles, prompting Prince Charles to mutter, "These bloody people.

whether from enthusiasm for Easter and the wedding or from the fact that, for eleven days, it would be impossible to get any work done.

In 1923, when Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon—the Queen Mum, pre-munich—married Prince Albert, Duke of York, a request by the nascent BBC to broadcast the ceremony was rejected by

church officials, for fear that men "might hear the service, perhaps even some of them sitting in public houses, with their hats on." Reverence for the monarchy, if not the monarch, has since eroded: while the Queen is widely admired for her sense of duty, her son Prince Andrew, who is fond of taking helicopters to golf courses, has earned the nickname Air Miles Andy. Upon the announcement of William and Kate's engagement, the Bishop of Willesden wrote, on his Facebook page, "I think we need a party in Calais for all good republicans who can't stand the nauseating tosh that surrounds this event. . . . I managed to avoid the last disaster in slow motion between Big Ears and the Porcelain Doll, and hope to avoid this one too." (He later apologized.)

Republicanism, in Britain, is normally regarded as a harmless and mildly embarrassing pursuit, much

like morris dancing or Presbyterianism. So the anti-monarchist group Republic save the wedding—and its attendant excesses—as an opportunity to attract support for its mission. It had launched a contest to come up with a slogan for a window sign: suggestions ranged from "Stuff the Royal Wedding" to "Parasites Feck Off Back Home to Germany." By some associative property of paternalism, many Brits preferred to think of themselves as conspirators in a scheme to co-opt the world, even as the Royal Family conspired to co-opt them: pubs



Weddings are, in a sense, the British monarchy's works of art.

I can't bear that man. I mean, he's so awful, he really is." Still, Witchell said, "it's a bit of a corny cliché to say it's an excuse for a party, but it is, and I think that people are just pleased for the opportunity to celebrate something." A streak of implausibly glorious weather helped: if ever there was a moment to believe that the wedding would somehow advance the commonweal, it was during the week before the ceremony, as absconding office workers sneaked pints on the sunny pavements of flag-draped streets. By Good Friday, all London was giddy,

open until 1 A.M., a bank holiday in every pot! Graham Smith, the head of Republic, saw the wedding less as a consensual entertainment than as a transparent ploy to beguile the populace in a year of deep cuts to civic services—an attempt by the Royal Family to wag the corgi. “This wedding is an effort to shore up support for a rather shabby political stitch-up,” Smith said. “It’s not really appropriate in a modern democracy.”

Clarence House has been insistent that Kate and William are a contemporary couple, who want a wedding that will lift the spirits of a down-trodden nation, while respecting the atmosphere of austerity. Instead of a traditional registry, they have asked well-wishers to make gifts to a list of twenty-six charities. (They may be hoping to avoid the fate of the Queen, who as a bride received five hundred cases of tinned pineapple from the people of Queensland.) Much has been made of the fact that Kate will be the first royal bride since 1963 to travel to the palace in an automobile, rather than a horse-drawn carriage. This is supposed to be very modern. The car that will carry Kate is a Rolls-Royce Phantom, which was donated to the Queen’s private fleet on the anniversary of her Silver Jubilee. (The Dagestani oil baron also sent a Rolls to collect his family’s newest recruit.) The rituals of the monarchy are glazed with a patina of immemorial heritage, but Queen Victoria, with her white dress and her twelve bridesmaids, basically invented the royal wedding as we know it, in 1840. Some dynasties commission great churches; the Windsors get married in them. Weddings are the British monarchy’s works of art, reflecting the values and the vanities of their patrons.

For this most important union, which will either cement or corrode the public’s support for another generation of monarchy, the Royal Family has made gestures of accessibility—William and Kate, toothy and cuddling, have a Web site that looks indistinguishable from any other young couple’s page on theknot.com. But it remains to be seen whether the Windsors’ presumption that commoners will be happy to eat their sausage rolls in the streets while an élite of six hundred par-

ties at Buckingham Palace is a nostalgic one. At Queen Elizabeth’s wedding, the menu featured a dessert called Bombe Glacée Princess Elizabeth; guests at the marriage of Prince Charles and Diana Spencer were treated to *Suprême de Volaille* *Princesse de Galles*. Weeks after budget-cut protesters attacked Fortnum & Mason, hamper peddlers to the Crown, will the Windsors hazard *Canapés à la Catherine*?

In December, the Queen cancelled the annual Christmas party for the palace staff, citing “the difficult economic circumstances facing this country.” She is throwing the wedding lunch; Prince Charles is giving the dinner dance; the Middletons are contributing an unspecified sum. Still, the festivities will cost British taxpayers an estimated twenty million pounds. The royal wedding is the world’s biggest cash bar.

The first commoner to ascend the British throne was Elizabeth Wydeville, a war widow who is said to have waylaid Edward IV during a deer hunt in Whitebottle Forest, falling to her knees beneath an oak tree and begging succor for her two young sons. This tale is apocryphal, but Elizabeth somehow managed to catch the King’s attention: the couple wed in a secret ceremony at a remote chapel in Northamptonshire, in the early morning of May 1, 1464. The marriage was a political liability for King Edward, the first Yorkist sovereign, whose impulsive choice alienated a fractious court. Much of the nobility had hoped to see him make a useful match with a French princess. According to “The Ring and the Crown: A History of Royal Weddings 1066-2011,” by Alison Weir, Kate Williams, Sarah Gristwood, and Tracy Borman, “Instead to their shock and ‘great displeasure,’ they were presented with the first commoner to occupy the Queen Consort’s throne, who came complete with a horde of greedy, ambitious relatives.” Two hundred years later, when the future James II married Maria Beatrice d’Este, a princess from Modena, the Earl of Rochester wrote a sneering poem about an imaginary Italian bridal attendant named Signior Dildo.

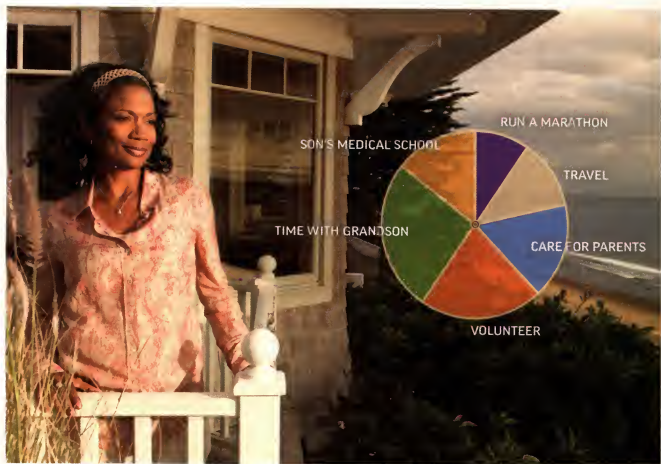
Weddings bring out the snob in all of

us—we rate the flowers, we critique the toasts—but no social hierarchy is more finely calibrated than the British class system, which, in the form of the peerage, is legally enshrined. Kate Middleton is descended, on her father’s side, from lawyers and mill owners, and, on her mother’s side, from coal miners. (The family of Prince William’s great-grandmother, the Queen Mum, owned the Durham colliery in which Kate’s ancestors worked.) Her parents are self-made millionaires, the owners of an Internet party-supply company called Party Pieces. (For a wedding favor, they offer praline dice, at thirty-five pence each, or little chocolate soccer balls that come in their own mesh bag.)

To Americans, the Middletons seem a laudably mobile bunch. In Britain, they make an almost novelistically engineered claqué of arrivistes. Their name is Middleton, as though cherry-picked by Dickens to signal their status as archetypes of the striving bourgeoisie. Kate’s father, Michael, is a solid-seeming guy. Her mother, Carole, is caricatured as “pushy”—the modern-day equivalent of “greedy and ambitious”—because she supposedly keeps a picture of William as the wallpaper on her cell phone, and has maintained her figure by subsisting on a diet of prawns and cottage cheese. (The sharp-elbowed mother-of-the-bride stereotype goes back a long way: contemporaries of Elizabeth Wydeville gossiped that her mother used witchcraft to compel Edward’s proposal.) Rounding out the clan, like characters out of Austen, are Pippa, the eligible second sister, and James, the dippy younger brother. In 2009, Carole’s brother, Gary Goldsmith, cut lines of cocaine in front of reporters from *News of the World*, before boasting that his niece and her boyfriend were due to visit him at his house in Ibiza, which he calls La Maison de Bang Bang. Still, the main problem people seem to have with the Middletons is that Carole once worked as a “trolley dolly”—an airline stewardess—and has been known to chew gum.

The Middletons may be perceived as parvenus, but they have behaved unimpeachably. Their work ethic and marital stability might be examples to the Royal Family. Nevertheless, they will inevitably be eclipsed by their new in-laws on the day of the wedding and in the life of



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her daughter thereafter. (They have recently been obliged to acquire a family crest.) That they have been willing, and perhaps even eager, to strike this bargain has given rise to suspicion about their motives. The argument is paradoxical but, in its way, compelling: the Middletons are unworthy of the Windsors because who, other than shameless social climbers, would accept such a raw deal? Even the family of Prince Philip Mountbatten—he was originally a Battenberg, a member of the House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg—had to undergo some scrubbing before his 1947 marriage to the Queen. His four sisters had all wed German noblemen, some of them with Nazi connections. None were invited to the wedding. Amazingly, Uncle Gary has made the cut.

Only families of the most rarefied lineage could presume to fare much better under such scrutiny. Some of them seem to resent the Middletons for depriving them of the chance. Nicholas Witchell, the BBC correspondent, said, "There are certainly the mothers of some eligible young aristocratic women who are very disappointed, but, then, mothers are, if they feel their daughters have been pipped at the post."

The raciest thing I've ever heard about Kate Middleton is that her dorm mates at Marlborough College, the Wiltshire boarding school that she attended, nicknamed her Middlebum. A person I know who has spent time with the Middletons offers nothing but glowing reports of Kate, even in casual conversations that might have encouraged indiscretion or embroidery. Kate is almost objectionably unobjectionable. Her official biography states that she enjoys hill walking. Her art-history thesis was titled "Angels from Heaven: Lewis Carroll's Photographic Interpretation of Childhood." Kate and William met at St. Andrews, the Scottish university, which is regarded as a mating ground for toffish types: titled boys in Barbour jackets ("Hooray Henrys" or "Rah Rah Ruperts"), pretty girls in pashminas ("Sloane Rangers"). Kate, in her grooming and in her interests, embodies the conservative sensibility that is more or less akin to that of the American prep. For all her sheen, she is, at heart, a provincial girl—she hangs out at horse races,

she has never visited the United States. Her discipline is estimable. When William briefly broke up with her, in 2007, she maintained a glamorous dignity, saying nothing. In the interview that Kate and William gave to ITV's Tom Bradby after announcing their engagement, she sounded almost as sheltered and eager to please as the young Diana, whose ring she obligingly modelled ("Obviously, I would have loved to have met her"), while William exuded the bluff assurance ("I've been reliably informed it's a sapphire with some diamonds") of, well, a prince. There is something touching about the gilded isolation of Kate Middleton, who has barely held a job and seems to spend a lot of time having her hair done with her mother. She is a sort of Royal Katie Holmes, with premarital attempts at reinventing her as a more queenly Catherine no more catching than Holmes's to get people to call her Kate Cruise.

One Sunday afternoon in April, I drove to Bucklebury—Kate Middleton's home town. A tiny, bucolic village in Berkshire, it is picturesque but not precisely so. There is a parish church, and a petting zoo. Fields of daffodils bloom behind high hedges. In "William & Kate: The Love Story," Robert Jobson writes, "The Middleton family are a fixture of village life and are often seen at the charity fairs that boast sheep racing, splat the rat and jugglers." The only inhabitants I could spot were a few chestnut horses, grazing in green pastures. It turned out that many of the burghers were congregated in a local pub.

The Old Boot, in the nearby hamlet of Stanford Dingley, is owned by John Haley. The Middletons, frequent patrons, have invited Haley to the wedding. They have also invited the postman, the butcher—a "metric martyr," who refused to switch to kilos after Britain joined the E.U.—and the couple who run the local convenience store. (William likes to buy Vienetta ice cream there.) The pub is a modest place. Inside, a fire sputtered in a stone hearth. White lace curtains framed murky windows. A flyer advertised a Royal Wedding Party, to be held on April 29th, with live music and a disco, and competitions for "best royal fancy dress" and "best royal collage or painting."

Near the bar, Peter Harris, a forty-

four-year-old university researcher (he studies pollination), was drinking a beer. "If you'd been here earlier, you'd have seen James and Pippa riding bikes up the hill," he said. Harris had lived in the area most of his life. Some of his neighbors, he said, had been offended by the hubbub—a bus company had been offering tours of "Kate Middleton Country"—but most of them were tickled by the prospect that one of their own rat-splatters had graduated to shooting game at Balmoral. "The Middletons are really sort of middle-class people, well-mannered, approachable," he said. "I think it's about time we had something like this to put Stanford Dingley on the map!"

Among Buckingham Palace cour-tiers, the rule of thumb is that "a minute of visit requires three hours of planning." Every moment of a member of the Royal Family's life is excruciatingly choreographed, none more so than one's marriage. Prince William has known, since before puberty, that on the day of his wedding he would be expected to kiss his bride in exactly the same spot—the balcony of Buckingham Palace—on which his father kissed his mother, in 1981. Every morning, according to Gyles Brandreth's "Philip and Elizabeth: Portrait of a Royal Marriage," he performs the same calisthenics routine as his father and grandfather—an eleven-minute regimen of situps, pushups, and in-place running, developed by the Royal Canadian Air Force in the nineteen-fifties. (Unlike Prince Philip, he does not follow the Atkins diet.) His funeral has probably been planned since the day he was born. Robert Jobson writes that the files of the Lord Chamberlain's Office at Buckingham Palace are filled with blue-prints for every conceivable "hatch, match, or dispatch." In 1952, Prince Philip chafed at the suggestion that his children would take his wife's last name: "I am nothing but a bloody amoeba!"

Monarchies exist primarily to perpetuate themselves. In the Middle Ages, royal weddings were accompanied by "bedding ceremonies," in which newlyweds were escorted to their bedchamber by a brigade of guests, playing songs on shawms, viols, and tabors. Ladies-in-waiting undressed the bride. Gentlemen stripped the groom to his nightshirt. Fortunately, in 2011 we have not been subjected to testimonials

like that of Lord Fernoy, who declared, in 1981, that his niece, Diana, was a "bona fide" virgin. Prince Charles and Camilla seem pretty relaxed about the issue. "They've been practicing for long enough," Charles said, when news of the wedding was announced. Camilla, talking to reporters, sounded ebullient. "It's the most brilliant news. I'm just so happy and so are they. It's wicked!" (Camilla Parker Bowles, *Masshole?*) We know that the Queen approves of Kate Middleton, because the Royal Marriages Act of 1772, which is still on the books, forbids any member of the Royal Family to marry without her permission.

William has taken his time choosing a mate, but, still, he is, in some respects, a glorified stud. The fixation on Kate's background has had an almost eugenicist tinge: when people talk about her infusing the Royal Family with fresh blood, it is not a metonymy. Maria of Modena, on her wedding night, was so terrified that she hid in a cupboard. In their interview with Tom Bradby, William and Kate spoke of their most pressing dynastic obligation in the way that a Presidential candidate speaks of tackling the budget deficit. "Obviously, we want a family," William said. "So we'll have to start thinking about that."

"One would very much hope that there will be children from this marriage," Charles Kidd, the editor of *Debutant's Peerage & Baronetage*, said. He can tell you that the proper way to address the widow of a marquis is "the Dowager Marchioness."

William and Kate's final public appearance before their wedding was on April 11th, in East Lancashire, an economically depressed region just north of Manchester. Their first stop was the town of Darwen, where they were scheduled to open a school. Cathy McDonald, a stay-at-home mother, had missed the pair's entrance. She was holding a wan flag imprinted with a portrait of the couple framed by a heart. "I'm wet through!" she said, scrunching her face against the wind as fat raindrops plopped on her scalp. "I didn't see Kate, but apparently she was wearing navy blue!"

Next on the day's itinerary was Blackburn, a post-industrial city that used to be famous for its cotton. By noon, hundreds of people had gathered at Witton Country Park to await the couple's arrival. The



"It's not the snoring I mind—it's the talking noise you make during the day."

purpose of their visit, according to a release by William's private secretary, was "to demonstrate the importance of outdoor recreational space." William is the Patron of the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge, which, in honor of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, next year, will permanently protect two thousand and twelve playing fields. "Prince William's Patronage of the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields is a personal tribute to the Queen, to celebrate Her Majesty's 60-year-reign," the release read.

Reporters had been reminded that "they must not eavesdrop on Royal conversations and they must not make any direct approaches to Royal visitors." A receiving line of local dignitaries, including a woman wearing a zebra-print suit and a flowerpot hat, waited in their places. Metal barriers had been set up around a large field that William and Kate would inspect. Onlookers crowded against them—grandmothers in plastic bonnets, mothers with strollers, schoolchildren in white knesocks and scarlet beanies.

At around 1 P.M., a helicopter circled the area. Ten minutes later, the royal caravan sped up a gravel road and into Witton Park. The couple had arrived earlier than expected, in deference to the weather, and to their supporters' endurance in withstanding it. William emerged from a black Jaguar, wearing a dark suit. The wind whipped the back vent to re-

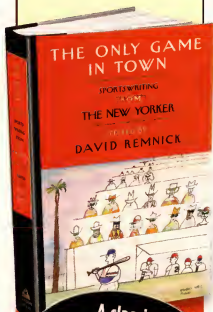
veal that it was lined in periwinkle silk. Kate followed, dressed in a trim navy-blue suit with a small peplum. She was carrying a clutch as if it were a shield. She and William walked down a path lined with well-wishers. He took the left side; she took the right. They worked methodically, stopping to exchange words and to accept flowers from anyone who proffered them. Their grips were steady and their smiles warm.

After a series of introductions, the couple took to the field. Kate started a girls' hundred-metre footrace by dropping a white flag. They watched disabled bicyclists ride around a dirt track. The scene had a faraway quality—watching the couple watch other people do things was like viewing a film with no sound. Kate had debuted a new hair style, with her glossy brown tresses swept back in an equine cascade. The couple made mute figures around the field, like participants in a dressage competition. Kate looked beautiful, and very thin. She walked with precision. But her wave was not yet quite regal. She wiggled her wrist from side to side, fingers splayed, rather than cutting the air with a cupped palm. Every once in a while, she reached up to brush a phantom strand of hair out of her eyes. ♦

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Lauren Collins talks about the royal wedding.

*It's not whether
you win or lose—
it's how you write
about the game.*



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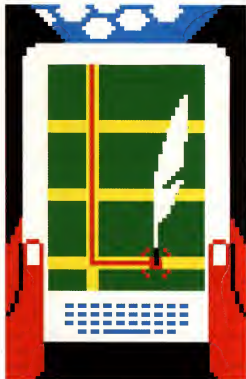
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NEW APP ON THE KINDLE 2GO

BY DAVE HANSON



Kindle, the device that merges technology and reading, now comes with a surprising new application for literary travellers. Readers who want to learn more about their favorite poets can simply type in a name and get directions to the poet's former home.

For example, type in "Allen Ginsberg":

You, who take Route 80 past the saxophone-screaming fever-dream factories, belching steam like hoochsmoke out of a Negro tenement,

Who take Exit 62 and shine on the one-eyed no-legged veteran at the bottom of the ramp who wants to get back on his crackling hydrogen lightship but all he's got is the jungle-rhythm jangle of dimes in a soot-filled change can,

Who turn onto Passaic Boulevard, your hands gripping the wheel as tightly as if you're holding on to an O.D.ing junkie as you joyride past the neon flashing traffic light, the giant doughnut beck-

oning smackheads with dreams of sugar,

Who make a left on Jackson Boulevard, the Shell-station plaza glowing yellow as the urine in a drug-test beaker so full of THC it'll cost you a dead-end government job,

Who drive past the Shear Delight hair salon on the corner where Uncle Sam prepped you for crewcut wartime, you 60,000 names in black D.C. granite,

Who make a left on Washington Street, named for a maple-toothed slave owner with a wig like a Palm Beach matriarch, and park in front of a brick apartment building blackened by the skank from a Detroitful of cars,

Who phone from the corner and I'll throw down the key after I put it in the toe of a sock that's paced through restless burning streets and tied off the arms of sleepwalkers and blackjacked cops with quarters and been stuffed in pants to woo sailors and been worn across borders with peyote insoles.

Type in "William Carlos Williams":

so much depends
upon
a Red Lobster on the corner
of S.R. 22 and tompkins road
drive past it and there's no way to
turn around until you hit greenville

make the turn and we're the white
mailbox on the right
glazed with rainwater

Type in "Dylan Thomas":

Do not go gentle when you make
that right
For you must merge, merge into the
flood of rushing lights
Route 6 goes for miles, and you must
push into the night.

There's a hairpin turn around Mile-
post 8
Fight a force as strong as gravity and
stay, stay straight
Fight the wheel and beat back that
crooked fate.

And when you see an alehouse called
the Robin Hood
Drive past it (though I never could)
Then make a right—we're at 32
Milkwood.

Type in "Robert Frost":

Two roads diverge at the yellow light,
Alas you cannot travel both
If you pause and look down the one
that goes right
You'll see a really dreadful sight
The seething sprawl of suburban
growth.

There are Starbucks, Applebee's,
Best Buy, and Lowe's,
Staples, Ikea, Petco, and Sears,
T. J. Maxx, Victoria's Secret, two
Office Depots,
An Outback Steakhouse and three
Costcos
All this has sprung up in the last
seven years.

Nearby are McMansions, each with
an S.U.V.
On cul-de-sacs that are impeccably
drawn

8,000 square feet for a family of three
Lauren Drive, Ashley Road, Brittany
Street

Each named for a developer's spawn.

Congestion is the modern blight;
Traffic (like urban planners) is often
dense.

Two roads diverge at the blinking light;
Go left—for God's sake don't take
the right,

It will make all the difference.

Type in "T. S. Eliot":

The Cross Bronx¹ is the cruellest
road, breeding
Sumac trees in the medians and
shoulders, shading
Potholes so deep you could hide a
pony in them, hiding
Grafitti² gang bandits who ride up,
pointing

A gat³ to your head, glaring
Verriegeln Sie Ihre Autotüren.⁴

Once in Jersey the cars come and go
Between the Turnpike and Ramapo.⁵

Exit the Calle de Ulmus Parvifolia⁶
Pass a withered stump,⁷ an unmarked
grave filled with dry bones⁸
Make a left at the dry creek bed⁹ and
turn onto LXXVII Street¹⁰

To the house where the red lantern
throws its radiant light upon the
wall.¹¹

¹The section of I-95 that runs through
the Bronx. Access it from I-87 off the Major
Deegan Expressway, take it over the George
Washington Bridge, and stay on 95 until you
get to 17 North.

²Art form practiced by urban primitives.

³Firearm used by urban primitives.

⁴Lock your car doors.

⁵A town on the border of New York and
New Jersey.

⁶Elm Street.

⁷A symbol of man's dead past.

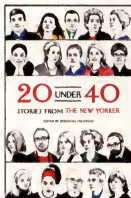
⁸A symbol of man's dead present. An eas-
ier landmark is the Amoco station now built
over it.

⁹A symbol of man's dead future. An eas-
ier landmark is the Olive Garden now built over
it.

¹⁰Seventy-seventh Street. The use of Roman
numerals signifies that it's a predominantly Italian
neighborhood.

¹¹My house. Arrive around 7:30. Our
phone is 917-555-0133. Much appreciate if
you could bring a dessert—keep in mind that
I'm lactose-intolerant. ♦

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ANNALS OF SCIENCE

DREAM MACHINE

The mind-expanding world of quantum computing.

BY RIVKA GALCHEN

On the outskirts of Oxford lives a brilliant and distressingly thin physicist named David Deutsch, who believes in multiple universes and has conceived of an as yet unbuildable computer to test their existence. His books have titles of colossal confidence ("The Fabric of Reality," "The Beginning of Infinity"). He rarely leaves his house. Many of his close colleagues haven't seen him for years, except at occasional conferences via Skype.

Deutsch, who has never held a job, is essentially the founding father of quantum computing, a field that devises distinctly powerful computers based on the branch of physics known as quantum mechanics. With one millionth of the hardware of an ordinary laptop, a quantum computer could store as many bits of information as there are particles in the universe. It could break previously unbreakable codes. It could answer questions about quantum mechanics that are currently far too complicated for a regular computer to handle. None of which is to say that anyone yet knows what we would really do with one. Ask a physicist what, practically, a quantum computer would be "good for," and he might tell the story of the nineteenth-century English scientist Michael Faraday, a seminal figure in the field of electromagnetism, who, when asked how an electromagnetic effect could be useful, answered that he didn't know but that he was sure that one day it could be taxed by the Queen.

In a stairwell of Oxford's Clarendon Physics Laboratory there is a photo poster from the late nineteen-nineties commemorating the Oxford Center for Quantum Computation. The photograph shows a well-groomed crowd of physicists gathered on the lawn. Photoshopped into a far corner, with the shadows all wrong, is the head of David Deutsch, looking like a time traveller teleported in for the day. It is tempting to interpret Deutsch's representation in the photograph as a collegial joke, because of Deutsch's belief that if a quantum computer were built it would

constitute near-irrefutable evidence of what is known as the Many Worlds Interpretation of quantum mechanics, a theory that proposes pretty much what one would imagine it does. A number of respected thinkers in physics besides Deutsch support the Many Worlds Interpretation, though they are a minority, and primarily educated in England, where the intense interest in quantum computing has at times been termed the Oxford flu.

But the infection of Deutsch's thinking has mutated and gone pandemic. Other scientists, although generally indifferent to the truth or falsehood of Many Worlds as a description of the universe, are now working to build these dreamed-up quantum-computing machines. Researchers at centers in Singapore, Canada, and New Haven, in collaboration with groups such as Google and NASA, may soon build machines that will make today's computers look like pocket calculators. But Deutsch complements the indifference of his colleagues to Many Worlds with one of his own—a professional indifference to the actual building of a quantum computer.

Physics advances by accepting absurdities. Its history is one of unbelievable ideas proving to be true. Aristotle quite reasonably thought that an object in motion, left alone, would eventually come to rest; Newton discovered that this wasn't true, and from there worked out the foundation of what we now call classical mechanics. Similarly, physics surprised us with the facts that the Earth revolves around the sun, time is curved, and the universe if viewed from the outside is beige.

"Our imagination is stretched to the utmost," the Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman noted, "not, as in fiction, to imagine things which are not really there, but just to comprehend those things which are there." Physics is strange, and the people who spend their life devoted to its study are more accustomed to

its strangeness than the rest of us. But, even to physicists, quantum mechanics—the basis of a quantum computer—is almost intolerably odd.

Quantum mechanics describes the natural history of matter and energy making their way through space and time. Classical mechanics does much the same, but, while classical mechanics is very accurate when describing most of what we see (sand, baseballs, planets), its descriptions of matter at a smaller scale are simply wrong. At a fine enough resolution, all those reliable rules about balls on inclined planes start to fail.

Quantum mechanics states that particles can be in two places at once, a quality called superposition; that two particles can be related, or “entangled,” such that they can instantly coordinate their properties, regardless of their distance in space and time; and that when we look at particles we unavoidably alter them. Also, in quantum mechanics, the universe, at its most elemental level, is random, an idea that tends to upset people. Confess your confusion about quantum mechanics to a physicist and you will be told not to feel bad, because physicists find it confusing, too. If classical mechanics is George Eliot, quantum mechanics is Kafka.

All the oddness would be easier to tolerate if quantum mechanics merely described marginal bits of matter or energy. But it is the physics of everything. Even Einstein, who felt at ease with the idea of wormholes through time, was so bothered by the whole business that, in 1935, he co-authored a paper titled “Can quantum-mechanical description of physical reality be considered complete?” He pointed out some of quantum mechanics’ strange implications, and then answered his question, essentially, in the negative. Einstein found entanglement particularly troubling, denigrating it as “spooky action at a distance,” a telling phrase, which consciously echoed the seventeenth-century disparagement of gravity.

The Danish physicist Niels Bohr took issue with Einstein. He argued that, in quantum mechanics, physics had run up against the limit of what science could hope to know. What seemed like nonsense *was* nonsense, and we needed to realize that science, though wonderfully good at predicting the outcomes of individual experiments, could not tell us about reality itself, which would remain forever

sadly misguided, like those earnest inquiries people mail to 221B Baker Street, addressed to Sherlock Holmes.

I met David Deutsch at his home, at four o’clock on a wintry Thursday afternoon. Deutsch grew up in the London area, took his undergraduate degree at Cambridge, stayed there for a master’s in math—which he claims he’s no good

at—and went on to Oxford for a doctorate in physics. Though affiliated with the university, he is not on staff and has never taught a course. “I love to give talks,” he told me. “I just don’t like giving talks that people don’t want to hear. It’s wrong to set up the educational system that way. But that’s not why I don’t teach. I don’t teach for visceral reasons—I just dislike it. If I were a biologist, I would be a theoretical biologist, because I don’t like the idea of cutting up frogs. Not for moral reasons but because it’s disgusting. Similarly, talking to a group of people who don’t want to be there is disgusting.” Instead, Deutsch has made money from lectures, grants, prizes, and his books.

In the half-light of the winter sun, Deutsch’s house looked a little shabby. The yard was full of what appeared to be English ivy, and near the entrance was something twiggy and bushlike that was either

dormant or dead. A handwritten sign on the door said that deliveries should “knock hard.” Deutsch answered the door. “I’m very much in a rush,” he told me, before I’d even stepped inside. “In a rush about so many things.” His thinness contributed to an oscillation of his apparent age between nineteen and a hundred and nineteen. (He’s fifty-seven.) His eyes, behind thick glasses, appeared outsized, like those of an appealing anime character. His vestibule was cluttered with old phone books, cardboard boxes, and piles of papers. “Which isn’t to say that I don’t have time to talk to you,” he continued. “It’s just that—that’s why the house is in



David Deutsch believes that quantum computers will give evidence for the existence of parallel universes. Photograph by Hans Gissinger.

behind a veil. Science merely revealed what reality looked like to us.

Bohr’s stance prevailed over Einstein’s. “Of course, both sides of that dispute were wrong,” Deutsch observed, “but Bohr was trying to obfuscate, whereas Einstein was actually trying to solve the problem.” As Deutsch notes in “The Fabric of Reality,” “To say that prediction is the purpose of a scientific theory is to confuse means with ends. It is like saying that the purpose of a spaceship is to burn fuel.” After Bohr, a “shut up and calculate” philosophy took over physics for decades. To delve into quantum mechanics as if its equations told the story of reality itself was considered

such disarray, because I'm so rushed."

More than one of Deutsch's colleagues told me about a Japanese documentary film crew that had wanted to interview Deutsch at his house. The crew asked if they could clean up the house a bit. Deutsch didn't like the idea, so the film crew promised that after filming they would reconstruct the mess as it was before. They took extensive photographs, like investigators at a crime scene, and then cleaned up. After the interview, the crew carefully reconstructed the former "disorder." Deutsch said he could still find things, which was what he had been worried about.

Taped onto the walls of Deutsch's living room were a map of the world, a periodic table, a hand-drawn cartoon of Karl Popper, a poster of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a taxonomy of animals, a taxonomy of the characters in "The Simpsons," color printouts of pictures of McCain and Obama, with handwritten labels reading "this one" and "that one," and two color prints of an actor who looked to me a bit like Hugh Grant. There were also old VHS tapes, an unused fireplace, a stationary exercise bike, and a large flat-screen television whose newness had no visible companion. Deutsch offered me tea and biscuits. I asked him about the Hugh Grant look-alike.

"You obviously don't watch much television," he replied. The man in the photographs was Hugh Laurie, a British actor known for his role in the American medical show "House." Deutsch described "House" to me as "a great program about epistemology, which, apart from fundamental physics, is really my core interest. It's a program about the myriad ways that knowledge can grow or can fail to grow." Dr. House is based on Sherlock Holmes, Deutsch informed me. "And House has a friend, Wilson, who is based on Watson. Like Holmes, House is an arch-rationalist. Everything's got to have a reason, and if he doesn't know the reason it's because he doesn't know it, not because there isn't one. That's an essential attitude in fundamental science." One imagines the ghost of Bohr would disagree.

Deutsch's reputation as a cloistered genius stems in large part from his foundational work in quantum computing. Since the nineteen-thirties, the field of computer science has held on to the

idea of a universal computer, a notion first worked out by the field's modern founder, the British polymath Alan Turing. A universal computer would be capable of computing itself as any other computer, just as a synthesizer can make the sounds made by any other musical instrument. In a 1985 paper, Deutsch pointed out that, because Turing was working with classical physics, his universal computer could imitate only a subset of possible computers. Turing's theory needed to account for quantum mechanics if its logic was to hold. Deutsch proposed a universal computer based on quantum physics, which would have calculating powers that Turing's computer (even in theory) could not simulate.

According to Deutsch, the insight for that paper came from a conversation in the early eighties with the physicist Charles Bennett, of I.B.M., about computational-complexity theory, at the time a sexy new field that investigated the difficulty of a computational task. Deutsch questioned whether computational complexity was a fundamental or a relative property. Mass, for instance, is a fundamental property, because it remains the same in any setting; weight is a relative property, because an object's weight depends on the strength of gravity acting on it. Identical baseballs on Earth and on the moon have equivalent masses, but different weights. If computational complexity was like mass—if it was a fundamental property—then complexity was quite profound; if not, then not.

"I was just sounding off," Deutsch said. "I said they make too much of this"—meaning complexity theory—"because there's no standard computer with respect to which you should be calculating the complexity of the task." Just as an object's weight depends on the force of gravity in which it's measured, the degree of computational complexity depended on the computer on which it was measured. One could find out how complex a task was to perform on a particular computer, but that didn't say how complex a task was *fundamentally*, in reference to the universe. Unless there really was such a thing as a universal computer, there was no way a description of complexity could be fundamental. Complexity theorists, Deutsch reasoned, were wasting their time.

Deutsch continued, "Then Charlie

said, quietly, 'Well, the thing is, there is a fundamental computer. The fundamental computer is physics itself.' That impressed Deutsch. Computational complexity was a fundamental property; its value referenced how complicated a computation was on that most universal computer, that of the physics of the world. "I realized that Charlie was right about that," Deutsch said. "Then I thought, But these guys are using the wrong physics. They realized that complexity theory was a statement about physics, but they didn't realize that it mattered whether you used the true laws of physics, or some approximation, i.e., classical physics." Deutsch began rewriting Turing's universal-computer work using quantum physics. "Some of the differences are very large," he said. Thus, at least in Deutsch's mind, the quantum universal computer was born.

A number of physics journals rejected some of Deutsch's early quantum-computing work, saying it was "too philosophical." When it was finally published, he said, "a handful of people kind of got it." One of them was the physicist Artur Ekert, who had come to Oxford as a graduate student, and who told me, "David was really the first one who formulated the concept of a quantum computer."

Other important figures early in the field included the reclusive physicist Stephen J. Wiesner, who, with Bennett's encouragement, developed ideas like quantum money (uncounterfeitable!) and quantum cryptography, and the philosopher of physics David Albert, whose imagining of introspective quantum automata (think robots in analysis) Deutsch describes in his 1985 paper as an example of "a true quantum computer." Ekert says of the field, "We're a bunch of odd ducks."

Although Deutsch was not formally Ekert's adviser, Ekert studied with him. "He kind of adopted me," Ekert recalled, "and then, afterwards, I kind of adopted him. My tutorials at his place would start at around 8 P.M., when David would be having his lunch. We'd stay talking and working until the wee hours of the morning. He likes just talking things over. I would leave at 3 or 4 A.M., and then David would start properly working afterwards. If we came up with something, we would write the paper, but sometimes

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we wouldn't write the paper, and if someone else also came up with the solution we'd say, 'Good, now we don't have to write it up.'" It was not yet clear, even in theory, what a quantum computer might be better at than a classical computer, and so Deutsch and Ekert tried to develop algorithms for problems that were intractable on a classical computer but that might be tractable on a quantum one.

One such problem is prime factorization. A holy grail of mathematics for centuries, it is the basis of much current cryptography. It's easy to take two large prime numbers and multiply them, but it's very difficult to take a large number that is the product of two primes and then deduce what the original prime factors are. To factor a number of two hundred digits or more would take a regular computer many lifetimes. Prime factorization is an example of a process that is easy one way (easy to scramble eggs) and very difficult the other (nearly impossible to unscramble them). In cryptography, two large prime numbers are multiplied to create a security key. Unlocking that key would be the equivalent of unscrambling an egg. Using prime factorization in this way is called RSA encryption (named for the scientists who proposed it, Rivest, Shamir, and Adleman), and it's how most everything is kept secret on the Internet, from your credit-card information to I.R.S. records.

In 1992, the M.I.T. mathematician Peter Shor heard a talk about theoretical quantum computing, which brought to his attention the work of Deutsch and other foundational thinkers in what was then still an obscure field. Shor worked on the factorization problem in private. "I wasn't sure anything would come of it," Shor explained. But, about a year later, he emerged with an algorithm that (a) could only be run on a quantum computer, and (b) could quickly find the prime factors of a very large number—the grail! With Shor's algorithm, calculations that would take a normal computer longer than the history of the universe would take a sufficiently powerful quantum computer an afternoon. "Shor's work was the biggest jump," the physicist David DiVincenzo, who is considered among the most knowledgeable about the history of quantum computing, says. "It was the moment when we were, like, Oh, now we see what it would be good for."

Today, quantum computation has the sustained attention of experimentalists; it also has serious public and private funding. Venture-capital companies are already investing in quantum encryption devices, and university research groups around the world have large teams working both to build hardware and to develop quantum-computer applications—for example, to model proteins, or to better understand the properties of superconductors.

Artur Ekert became a key figure in the transition from pure theory to building machines. He founded the quantum computation center at Oxford, as well as a similar center a few years later at Cambridge. He now leads a center in Singapore, where the government has made quantum-computing research one of its top goals. "Today in the field there's a lot of focus on lab implementation, on how and from what you could actually build a quantum computer," DiVincenzo said. "From the perspective of just counting, you can say that the majority of the field now is involved in trying to build some hardware. That's a result of the success of the field." In 2009, Google announced that it had been working on quantum-computing algorithms for three years, with the aim of having a computer that could quickly identify particular things or people from among vast stores of video and images—David Deutsch, say, from among millions of untaged photographs.

In the early nineteenth century, a "computer" was any person who computed: someone who did the math for building a bridge, for example. Around 1830, the English mathematician and inventor Charles Babbage worked out his idea for an Analytical Engine, a machine that would remove the human from computing, and thus bypass human error. Nearly no one imagined an analytical engine would be of much use, and in Babbage's time no such machine was ever built to

completion. Though Babbage was prone to serious mental breakdowns, and though his bent of mind was so odd that he once wrote to Alfred Lord Tennyson correcting his math (Babbage suggested rewriting "Every minute dies a man / Every minute one is born" as "Every moment dies a man / Every moment one and a sixteenth is born," further noting that although the exact figure was 1.167, "something must, of course, be conceded to the laws of meter")—we can now say the guy was on to something.

A classical computer—any computer we know today—transforms an input into an output through nothing more than the manipulation of binary bits, units of information that can be either zero or one. A quantum computer is in many ways like a regular computer, but instead of bits it uses qubits. Each qubit (pronounced "Q-bit") can be zero or one, like a bit, but a qubit can also be zero *and* one—the quantum-mechanical quirk known as superposition. It is the state that the cat in the classic example of Schrödinger's closed box is stuck in: dead and alive at the same time. If one reads quantum-mechanical equations literally, superposition is ontological, not epistemological; it's not that we don't *know* which state the cat is in, but that the cat really *is* in both states at once. Superposition is like Freud's description of true ambivalence: not feeling unsure, but feeling opposing extremes of conviction at once. And, just as ambivalence holds more information than any single emotion, a qubit holds more information than a bit.

What quantum mechanics calls entanglement also contributes to the singular powers of qubits. Entangled particles have a kind of E.S.P.: regardless of distance, they can instantly share information that an observer cannot even perceive is there. Input into a quantum computer can thus be dispersed among entangled qubits, which lets the processing of that information be spread out as well: tell one particle something, and it can instantly spread the word among all the other particles with which it's entangled.

There's information that we can't perceive when it's held among entangled particles; that information is their collective secret. As quantum mechanics has taught us, things are inexorably changed by our trying to ascertain anything about them. Once observed, qubits are no lon-



ger in a state of entanglement, or of superposition: the cat commits irrevocably to life or death, and this ruins the quantum computer's distinct calculating power. A quantum computer is the pot that, if watched, really won't boil. Charles Bennett described quantum information as being "like the information of a dream—we can't show it to others, and when we try to describe it we change the memory of it."

But, once the work on the problem has been done among the entangled particles, then we can look. When one turns to a quantum computer for an "answer," that answer, from having been held in that strange entangled way, among many particles, needs then to surface in just one, ordinary, unentangled place. That transition from entanglement to non-entanglement is sometimes termed "collapse." Once the system has collapsed, the information it holds is no longer a dream or a secret or a strange cat at once alive and dead; the answer is then just an ordinary thing we can read off a screen.

Qubits are not merely theoretical. Early work in quantum-computer hardware built qubits by manipulating the magnetic nuclei of atoms in a liquid soup with electrical impulses. Later teams, such as the one at Oxford, developed qubits using single trapped ions, a method that confines charged atomic particles to a particular space. These qubits are very precise, though delicate; protecting them from interference is quite difficult. More easily manipulated, albeit less precise, qubits have been built from superconducting materials arranged to model an atom. Typically, the fabrication of a qubit is not all that different from that of a regular chip. At Oxford, I saw something that resembled an oversize air-hockey table chaotically populated with a specialty Lego set, with what looked like a salad-bar sneeze guard hovering over it; this extended apparatus comprised lasers and magnetic-field generators and optical cavities, all arranged at just the right angles to manipulate and protect from interference the eight tiny qubits housed in a steel tube at the table's center.

Oxford's eight-qubit quantum computer has significantly less computational power than an abacus, but fifty to a hundred qubits could make something as powerful as any laptop. A team in Bristol,

England, has a small, four-qubit quantum computer that can factor the number 15. A Canadian company claims to have built one that can do Sudoku, though that has been questioned by some who say that the processing is effectively being done by normal bits, without any superposition or entanglement.

Increasing the number of qubits, and thus the computer's power, is more than a simple matter of stacking. "One of the main problems with scaling up is a qubit's fidelity," Robert Schoelkopf, a physics professor at Yale who leads a quantum-computing team, explained. By fidelity, he refers to the fact that qubits "decohere"—fall out of their information-holding state—very easily. "Right now, qubits can be faithful for about a microsecond. And our calculations take about one hundred nanoseconds. Either calculations need to go faster or qubits need to be made more faithful."

What qubits are doing as we avert our gaze is a matter of some dispute, and occasionally—"shut up and calculate"—of some determined indifference, especially for more pragmatically minded physicists. For Deutsch, to really understand the workings of a quantum computer necessitates subscribing to Hugh

They were in the air on chairs,
the bride and groom, when of course
they needed a table so we lifted

a table, a dishwasher
and our shoulders were strong enough,
a sofa and I began to understand

the demands of Judaism
when we let go and they stayed, decades,
their children balloons

who've risen even higher,
O love, that makes us want to live
in the sky with the hawks,

the clouds, the pollen, the dust,
the planes, the satellites, the moon,
the clear, the clear, the blue

—Bob Hicok

Everett's Many Worlds Interpretation of quantum mechanics.

Everett's theory was neglected upon its publication, in 1957, and is still a minority view. It entails the following counter-intuitive reasoning: every time there is more than one possible outcome, all of them occur. So if a radioactive atom might or might not decay at any given second, it both does and doesn't; in one universe it does, and in another it doesn't. These small branchings of possibility then ripple out until everything that is possible in fact is. According to Many Worlds theory, instead of a single history there are innumerable branchings. In one universe your cat has died, in another he hasn't, in a third you died in a sledding accident at age seven and never put your cat in the box in the first place, and so on.

Many Worlds is an ontologically extravagant proposition. But it also bears some comfortably prosaic implications: in Many Worlds theory, science's aspiration to explain the world fully remains intact. The strangeness of superposition is, as Deutsch explains it, simply "the phenomenon of physical variables having different values in different universes." And entanglement, which so bothered Einstein and others, especially for its implication that particles could instantly

communicate regardless of their distance in space or time, is also resolved. Information that seemed to travel faster than the speed of light and along no detectable pathway—spookily transmitted as if via E.S.P.—can, in Many Worlds theory, be understood to move differently. Information still spreads through direct contact—the “ordinary” way; it’s just that we need to adjust to that contact being via the tangencies of abutting universes. As a further bonus, in Many Worlds theory randomness goes away, too. A ten-per-cent chance of an atom decaying is not arbitrary at all, but rather refers to the certainty that the atom will decay in ten per cent of the universes branched from that point. (This being science, there’s the glory of nuanced dissent around the precise meaning of each descriptive term, from “chance” to “branching” to “universe.”)

In the nineteen-seventies, Everett’s theory received some of the serious attention it missed at its conception, but today the majority of physicists are not much compelled. “I’ve never myself subscribed to that view,” DiVincenzo says, “but it’s not a harmful view.” Another quantum-computing physicist called it “completely ridiculous,” but Ekert said, “Of all the weird theories out there, I would say Many Worlds is the least weird.” In Deutsch’s view, “Everett’s approach was to look at quantum theory and see what it actually said, rather than hope it said certain things. What we want is for a theory to conform to reality, and, in order to find out whether it does, you need to see what the theory actually says. Which with the deepest theories is actually quite difficult, because they violate our intuitions.”

I told Deutsch that I’d heard that even Everett thought his theory could never be tested.

“That was a catastrophic mistake,” Deutsch said. “Every innovator starts out with the world view of the subject as it was before his innovation. So he can’t be blamed for regarding his theory as an interpretation. But”—and here he paused for a moment—“I proposed a test of the Everett theory.”

Deutsch posited an artificial-intelligence program run on a computer which could be used in a quantum-mechanics experiment as an “observer”; the A.I. program, rather than a scientist, would be doing the problematic “look-

ing,” and, by means of a clever idea that Deutsch came up with, a physicist looking at the A.I. observer would see one result if Everett’s theory was right, and another if the theory was wrong.

It was a thought experiment, though. No A.I. program existed that was anywhere near sophisticated enough to act as the observer. Deutsch argued that theoretically there could be such a program, though it could only be run on radically more advanced hardware—hardware that could model any other hardware, including that of the human brain. The computer on which the A.I. program would run “had to have the property of being universal... so I had to postulate this quantum-coherent universal computer, and that was really my first proposal for a quantum computer. Though I didn’t think of it as that. And I didn’t call it a quantum computer. But that’s what it was.” Deutsch had, it seems, come up with the idea for a quantum computer twice: once in devising a way to test the validity of the Many Worlds Interpretation, and a second time, emerging from the complexity-theory conversation, with evidenced argument supporting Many Worlds as a consequence.

To those who find the Many Worlds Interpretation needlessly baroque, Deutsch writes, “the quantum theory of parallel universes is not the problem—it is the solution.... It is the explanation—the

only one that is tenable—of a remarkable and counterintuitive reality.” The theory also explains how quantum computers might work. Deutsch told me that a quantum computer would be “the first technology that allows useful tasks to be performed in collaboration between parallel universes.” The quantum computer’s processing power would come from a kind of outsourcing of work, in which calculations literally take place in other universes. Entangled particles would function as paths of communication among different universes, sharing information and gathering the results. So, for example, with the case of Shor’s algorithm, Deutsch said, “When we run such an algorithm, countless instances of us are also running it in other universes. The computer then differentiates some of those universes (by creating a superposition) and as a result they perform part of the computation on a huge variety of different inputs. Later, those values affect each other, and thereby all contribute to the final answer, in just such a way that the same answer appears in all the universes.”

Deutsch is mainly interested in the building of a quantum computer for its implications for fundamental physics, including the Many Worlds Interpretation, which would be a victory for the argument that science can explain the world and that, consequently, reality is knowable. (“House cures people,” Deutsch said to me when discussing



“Swim across the moat but keep the pizza dry.”

Hugh Laurie, "because he's interested in solving problems, not because he's interested in people.") Shor's algorithm excites Deutsch, but here is how his excitement comes through in his book "The Fabric of Reality":

To those who still cling to a single-universe world-view, I issue this challenge: *explain how Shor's algorithm works.* I do not merely mean predict that it will work, which is merely a matter of solving a few uncontroversial equations. I mean provide an explanation. When Shor's algorithm has factorized a number, using 10^{30} or so times the computational resources that can be seen to be present, where was the number factorized? There are only about 10^{91} atoms in the entire visible universe, an utterly minuscule number compared with 10^{30} . So if the visible universe were the extent of physical reality, physical reality would not even remotely contain the resources required to factorize such a large number. Who did factorize it, then? How, and where, was the computation performed?

Deutsch believes that quantum computing and Many Worlds are inextricably bound. He is nearly alone in this conviction, though many (especially around Oxford) concede that the construction of a sizable and stable quantum computer might be evidence in favor of the Everett interpretation. "Once there are actual quantum computers," Deutsch said to me, "and a journalist can go to the actual labs and ask how does that actual machine work, the physicists in question will then either talk some obfuscatory nonsense, or will explain it in terms of parallel universes. Which will be newsworthy. Many Worlds will then become part of our culture. Really, it has nothing to do with making the computers. But psychologically it has everything to do with making them."

It's tempting to view Deutsch as a visionary in his devotion to the Many Worlds Interpretation, for the simple reason that he has been a visionary before. "Quantum computers should have been invented in the nineteen-thirties," he observed near the end of our conversation. "The stuff that I did in the late nineteen-seventies and early nineteen-eighties didn't use any innovation that hadn't been known in the thirties." That is straightforwardly true. Deutsch went on, "The question is why."

DiVincenzo offered a possible explanation. "Your average physicists will say, 'I'm not strong in philosophy and I don't really know what to think, and it doesn't

matter.'" He does not subscribe to Many Worlds, but is reluctant to dismiss Deutsch's belief in it, partly because it has led Deutsch to come up with his important theories, but also because "quantum mechanics does have a unique place in physics, in that it does have a subcurrent of philosophy you don't find even in Newton's laws or gravity. But the majority of physicists say it's a quagmire they don't want to get into—they'd rather work out the implications of ideas; they'd rather calculate something."

At Yale, a team led by Robert Schoelkopf has built a two-qubit quantum computer. "Deutsch is an original thinker and those early papers remain very important," Schoelkopf told me. "But what we're doing here is trying to develop hardware, to see if these descriptions that theorists have come up with work." They have configured their computer to run what is known as a Grover's algorithm, one that deals with a four-card-monte type of question: Which hidden card is the queen? It's a sort of Shor's algorithm for beginners, something that a small quantum computer can take on.

The Yale team fabricates their qubit processor chips in house. "The chip is basically made of a very thin wafer of sapphire or silicon—something that's a good insulator—that we then lay a patterned film of superconducting metal on to form the wiring and qubits," Schoelkopf said. What they showed me was smaller than a pinkie nail and looked like a map of a subway system.

Schoelkopf and his colleague Michel Devoret, who leads a separate team, took me to a large room of black lab benches, inscrutable equipment, and not particularly fancy monitors. The aesthetic was inadvertent steampunk. The dust in the room made me sneeze. "We don't like the janitors to come sweep for fear they'll disturb something," Schoelkopf said.

The qubit chip is small, but its supporting apparatus is imposing. The largest piece of equipment is the plumbing of the very high-end refrigerator, which reduces the temperature around the two qubits to ten millidegrees above absolute zero. The cold improves the computer's fidelity. Another apparatus produces the microwave signals that manipulate the qubits and set them into any degree of superposition that an experimenter chooses.

Running this Grover's algorithm takes a regular computer three or fewer steps—if after checking the third card you still haven't found the queen, you know she is under the fourth card—and on average it takes 2.25 steps. A quantum computer can run it in just one step. This is because the qubits can represent different values at the same time. In the four-card-monte example, each of the cards is represented by one of four states: 0,0; 0,1; 1,0; 1,1. Schoelkopf designates one of these states as the queen, and the quantum computer must determine which one. "The magic comes from the initial state of the computer," he explained. Both of the qubits are set up, via pulses of microwave radiation, in a superposition of zero and one, so that each qubit represents two states at once, and together the two qubits represent all four states.

"Information can, in a way, be holographically represented across the whole computer; that's what we exploit," Devoret explained. "This is a property you don't find in a classical information processor. A bit has to be in one state—it has to be here or there. It's useful to have the bit be everywhere."

Through superposition and entanglement, the computer simultaneously investigates each of the four possible queen locations. "Right now we only get the right answer eighty per cent of the time, and we find even that pretty exciting," Schoelkopf said.

With Grover's algorithm, or theoretically with Shor's, calculations are performed in parallel, though not necessarily in parallel worlds. "It's as if I had a gazillion classical computers that were all testing different prime factors at the same time," Schoelkopf summarized. "You start with a well-defined state, and you end with a well-defined state. In between, it's a crazy entangled state, but that's fine."

Schoelkopf emphasized that quantum mechanics is a funny system but that it really is correct. "These oddnesses, like superposition and entanglement—they seemed like limitations, but in fact they are exploitable resources. Quantum mechanics is no longer a new or surprising theory that should strike us as odd."

Schoelkopf seemed to suggest that existential questions like those which Many Worlds poses might be, finally, simply impracticable. "If you have to describe

a result in my lab in terms of the computing chip," he continued, "plus the measuring apparatus, plus the computer doing data collection, plus the experimenter at the bench....at some point you just have to give up and say, Now quantum mechanics doesn't matter anymore, now I just need a classical result. At some point you have to simplify, you have to throw out some of the quantum information." When I asked him what he thought of Many Worlds and of "collapse" interpretations—in which "looking" provokes a shift from an entangled to an unentangled state—he said, "I have an alternate language which I prefer in describing quantum mechanics, which is that it should really be called Collapse of the Physicist." He knows it's a charming formulation, but he does mean something substantive in saying it. "In reality it's about where to collapse the discussion of the problem."

I thought Deutsch might be excited by the Yale team's research, and I e-mailed him about the progress in building quantum computers. "Oh, I'm sure they'll be useful in all sorts of ways," he replied. "I'm really just a spectator, though, in experimental physics."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle never liked detective stories that built their drama by deploying clues over time. Conan Doyle wanted to write stories in which all the ingredients for solving the crime were there from the beginning, and in which the drama would be, as in the Poe stories that he cited as precedents, in the mental workings of his ideal ratiocinator. The story of quantum computing follows a Holmesian arc, since all the clues for devising a quantum computer have been there essentially since the discovery of quantum mechanics, waiting for a mind to properly decode them.

But writers of detective stories have not always been able to hew to the rationality of their idealized creations. Conan Doyle believed in "spiritualism" and in fairies, even as the most famed spiritualists and fairy photographers kept revealing themselves to be fakes. Conan Doyle was also convinced that his friend Harry Houdini had supernatural powers; Houdini could do nothing to persuade him otherwise. Conan Doyle just *knew* that there was a spirit world out there, and he spent the last decades of his life

corralling evidence ex post facto to support his unshakable belief.

Physicists are ontological detectives. We think of scientists as wholly rational, open to all possible arguments. But to begin with a conviction and then to use one's intellectual prowess to establish support for that conviction is a methodology that really *has* worked for scientists, including Deutsch. One could argue that he dreamed up quantum computing because he was devoted to the idea that science can explain the world. Deutsch would disagree.

In "The Fabric of Reality," Deutsch writes, "I remember being told, when I was a small child, that in ancient times it was still possible to know *everything* that *was known*. I was also told that nowadays so much is known that no one could conceivably learn more than a tiny fraction of it, even in a long lifetime. The latter proposition surprised and disappointed me. In fact, I refused to believe it." Deutsch's life's work has been an attempt to support that intuitive disbelief—a gathering of argument for a conviction he held because he just knew.

Deutsch is adept at dodging questions about where he gets his ideas. He joked to me that they came from going to parties, though I had the sense that it had been years since he'd been to one. He said, "I don't like the style of science reporting that goes over that kind of thing. It's misleading. So Brahms lived on black coffee and forced himself to write a certain number of lines of music a day. Look," he went on, "I can't stop you from writing an article about a weird English guy who thinks there are parallel universes. But I think that style of thinking is kind of a put-down to the reader. It's almost like saying, If you're not weird in these ways, you've got no hope as a creative thinker. That's not true. The weirdness is only superficial."

Talking to Deutsch can feel like a case study of reason following desire; the desire is to be a creature of pure reason. As he said in praise of Freud, "He did a good service to the world. He made it O.K. to speak about the mechanisms of the mind, some of which we may not be aware of. His actual theory was all false, there's hardly a single true thing he said, but that's not so bad. He was a pioneer, one of the first who tried to think about things rationally." ♦

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THE CONSEQUENTIALIST

How the Arab Spring remade Obama's foreign policy.

BY RYAN LIZZA

Barack Obama came to Washington just six years ago, having spent his professional life as a part-time lawyer, part-time law professor, and part-time state legislator in Illinois. As an undergraduate, he took courses in history and international relations, but neither his academic life nor his work in Springfield gave him an especially profound grasp of foreign affairs. As he coasted toward winning a seat in the U.S. Senate, in 2004, he began to reach out to a broad range of foreign-policy experts—politicians, diplomats, academics, and journalists.

As a student during the Reagan years, Obama gravitated toward conventionally left-leaning positions. At Occidental, he demonstrated in favor of divesting from apartheid South Africa. At Columbia, he wrote a forgettable essay in *Sundial*, a campus publication, in favor of the nuclear-freeze movement. As a professor at the University of Chicago, he focussed on civil-rights law and race. And, as a candidate who emphasized his "story," Obama argued that what he lacked in experience with foreign affairs he made up for with foreign travel: four years in Indonesia as a boy, and trips to Pakistan, India, Kenya, and Europe during and after college. But there was no mistaking the lightness of his résumé. Just a year before coming to Washington, State Senator Obama was not immersed in the dangers of nuclear Pakistan or an ascendant China; as a provincial legislator, he was investigating the dangers of a toy known as the Yo-Yo Water Ball. (He tried, unsuccessfully, to have it banned.)

Obama had always read widely, and now he was determined to get a deeper education. He read popular books on foreign affairs by Fareed Zakaria and Thomas Friedman. He met with Anthony Lake, who had left the Nixon Administration over Vietnam and went on to work in Democratic Administrations, and with Susan Rice, who had served in the Clinton Administration and carried

with her the guilt of having failed to act to prevent the Rwandan genocide. He also contacted Samantha Power, a thirty-four-year-old journalist and Harvard professor specializing in human rights. In her twenties, Power had reported from the Balkans and witnessed the campaigns of ethnic cleansing there. In 2002, after graduating from Harvard Law School, she wrote "A Problem from Hell," which surveyed the grim history of six genocides committed in the twentieth century. Propounding a liberal-interventionist view, Power argued that "mass killing" on the scale of Rwanda or Bosnia must be prevented by other nations, including the United States. She wrote that America and its allies rarely have perfect information about when a regime is about to commit genocide; a President, therefore, must have "a bias toward belief" that massacres are imminent. Stopping the execution of thousands of foreigners, she wrote, was, in some cases, worth the cost in dollars, troops, and strained alliances. The book, which was extremely influential, especially on the left, won a Pulitzer Prize, in 2003. Critics considered her views radical and dangerously impractical.

After reading "A Problem from Hell," Obama invited Power to dinner. He said he wanted to talk about foreign policy. The meal lasted four hours. As a fledgling member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and an ambitious politician with his sights set on higher office, Obama agreed to have Power spend a year in his office as a foreign-policy fellow.

In his first news conference after winning election to the Senate, the press asked whether he intended to run for President, but he assured reporters, as well as his aides, that he would not even consider it until 2012 or 2016. He knew that he could not have a serious impact on issues like Iraq or the Sudan as a junior committee member, but he was de-

termined to learn the institution and to acquire, as Hillary Clinton had, a reputation not for celebrity but for substance. In foreign affairs, as in so much else, he was determined to break free of the old ideologies and categories. But he would take it step by step.

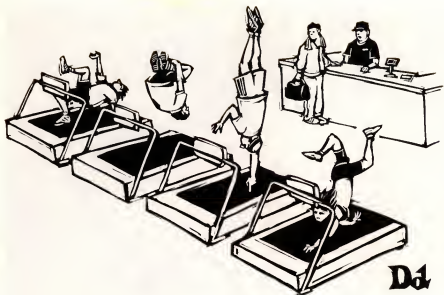
Obama entered the Senate in 2005, at a moment of passionate foreign-policy debate within the Democratic Party. The invasion of Iraq was seen as interventionism executed under false pretenses and with catastrophic consequences. Many on the left argued that liberal interventionists, particularly in Congress and in the press, had given crucial cover to the Bush Administration during the run-up to the war. Hillary Clinton, who often sided with the humanitarian hawks in her husband's White House, and who went on to vote for the Iraq war, in 2002, seemed to some to be the embodiment of all that had gone wrong.

One reaction among liberals to the Bush years and to Iraq was to retreat from "idealism" toward "realism," in which the United States would act cautiously and, above all, according to national interests rather than moral imperatives. The debate is rooted in the country's early history. America, John Quincy Adams argued, "does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to freedom and independence of all," but the "champion and vindicator only of her own."

In 1966, Adams's words were repeated by George Kennan, perhaps the most articulate realist of the twentieth century, in opposing the Vietnam War. To Kennan and his intellectual followers, foreign-policy problems are always more complicated than Americans, in their native idealism, usually allow. The use of force to stop human-rights abuses or to promote democracy, they argue, usually ends poorly. In the fall of 2002,



Obama has said that his foreign-policy ideas defy traditional categories and ideologies. Photographs by Martin Schoeller.



"It's improv night."

six months before the invasion of Iraq, Kennan said, "Today, if we went into Iraq, as the President would like us to do, you know where you begin. You never know where you are going to end."

As Obama sorted through the arguments, other foreign-policy liberals were determined to prevent Iraq from becoming the whole program of liberal internationalism. Humanitarian intervention—which Power helped advance, though she vigorously opposed the Iraq War—should not be abandoned because of the failures in Baghdad. Nor should American diplomacy turn away from emphasizing the virtues of bringing the world democracy. Anne-Marie Slaughter, a professor of international affairs at Princeton and a Democrat, wrote in the liberal journal *Democracy* that an overreaction to the Bush years might mean that "realists could again rule the day, embracing order and stability over ideology and values."

After little more than a year in the Senate, Obama was bored, and began to take seriously the frequent calls to run for President. To be a candidate, he needed to distinguish himself from his foremost potential opponent, Hillary Clinton, as well as from President Bush. One of the clearest paths to distinction, especially in the primaries, was to emphasize his early opposition, as a state senator, to the Iraq war. He started

to move away from the ideas of people like Power and Slaughter. He pointedly noted that George H. W. Bush's management of the end of the Cold War was masterly. The President had sometimes kept quiet about the aspirations of pro-democracy activists in Russia, Ukraine, and elsewhere, in order to maintain the confidence of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Kremlin. It was just the sort of political performance to which Obama aspired.

In making the case against Hillary Clinton, Obama slyly argued that the George W. Bush years were in some ways a continuation of the Bill Clinton years, and that the United States needed to return to the philosophy of an earlier era. The proselytizing about democracy and the haste to bomb other countries in the name of humanitarian aid had "stretched our military to the breaking point and distracted us from the growing threats of a dangerous world," Obama said in a speech in 2006, a few weeks before he announced his Presidential candidacy. He spoke of "a strategy no longer driven by ideology and politics but one that is based on a realistic assessment of the sobering facts on the ground and our interests in the region. This kind of realism has been missing since the very conception of this war, and it is what led me to publicly oppose it in 2002."

In 2007, Obama called Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national-security adviser and the reigning realist of the Democratic foreign-policy establishment. Obama told him that he had read his recent book, "Second Chance," in which Brzezinski criticized Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush and their handling of the post-Cold War world. They began to speak and exchange e-mails about policy, and Brzezinski travelled with Obama during a stretch of the campaign. In September, 2007, Brzezinski introduced Obama at an event in Clinton, Iowa, where the candidate discussed the failures in Iraq. "I thought he had a really incisive grasp of what the twenty-first century is all about and how America has to relate to it," Brzezinski told me. "He was reacting in a way that I very much shared, and we had a meeting of the minds—namely, that George Bush put the United States on a suicidal course."

As he campaigned in New Hampshire, in 2007, Obama said that he would not leave troops in Iraq even to stop genocide. "Well, look, if that's the criteria by which we are making decisions on the deployment of U.S. forces, then by that argument you would have three hundred thousand troops in the Congo right now, where millions have been slaughtered as a consequence of ethnic strife, which we haven't done," he said. "We would be deploying unilaterally and occupying the Sudan, which we haven't done."

At a campaign event in Pennsylvania, Obama said, "The truth is that my foreign policy is actually a return to the traditional bipartisan realistic policy of George Bush's father, of John F. Kennedy, of, in some ways, Ronald Reagan."

In the end, Barack Obama overcame Hillary Clinton's campaign warnings that he was too callow, too naïve about dealing with rogue regimes, too untested to respond to the "3 A.M." emergencies from all corners of the globe. Obama entered the White House at a moment of radical transition in global politics, and one of his most significant appointments was Clinton as his Secretary of State. Although he had made plain in the campaign that he disagreed with some of her foreign-policy views, he admired her discipline and believed that, as a member of the Cabinet, she wouldn't publicly

break with the President. And he would need her. Obama faced economic catastrophe at home and American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; serious regional threats from Pakistan and Iran; global terrorism; the ascendance of China and India; and a situation that was almost impossible to discuss—a vivid sense of American decline.

American values and interests are woven together, and no President is always either an idealist or a realist. Officials who identify with the same label often disagree with one another. Humanitarian interventionists were divided over the Iraq war; Cold War realists had split over détente with the Soviet Union. The categories describe only broad ideological directions and tendencies. But, as Richard Haass, the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, observed, “the battle between realists and idealists is the fundamental fault line of the American foreign-policy debate.”

After the Inauguration, the realists began to win that debate within the Administration. The two most influential foreign-policy advisers in the White House are Thomas Donilon, the national-security adviser, and Denis McDonough, a deputy national-security adviser. Donilon, who is fifty-five, is a longtime Washington lawyer, lobbyist, and Democratic Party strategist. McDonough started out as a congressional staffer and campaign adviser to Obama, a role that has given him a reputation as a non-ideological political fixer.

The National Security Council is a bureaucracy that helps the President streamline decision-making, and Donilon seems to have thought extensively about how that system works. Like the President, he values staff discretion. His rule for hiring at the N.S.C. is to find people who are, in his words, “high value, low maintenance.” Obama’s N.S.C. adopted the model of the first Bush Administration. “It’s essentially based on the process that was put in place by General Brent Scowcroft and Bob Gates in the late nineteen-eighties,” Donilon told me, speaking of Bush’s national-security adviser and his deputy, the current Secretary of Defense. The most important feature, Donilon said, is that the N.S.C., based at the White House, controls “the sole process through which policy would be developed.”

One of Donilon’s overriding beliefs, which Obama adopted as his own, was that America needed to rebuild its reputation, extricate itself from the Middle East and Afghanistan, and turn its attention toward Asia and China’s unchecked influence in the region. America was “overweighted” in the former and “underweighted” in the latter, Donilon told me. “We’ve been on a little bit of a Middle East detour over the course of the last ten years,” Kurt Campbell, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, said. “And our future will be dominated utterly and fundamentally by developments in Asia and the Pacific region.”

In December, 2009, Obama announced that he would draw down U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan by the end of his first term. He also promised, in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly last year, that he was “moving toward a more targeted approach” that “dismantles terrorist networks without deploying large American armies.”

“The project of the first two years has been to effectively deal with the legacy issues that we inherited, particularly the Iraq war, the Afghan war, and the war against Al Qaeda, while rebalancing our resources and our posture in the world,” Benjamin Rhodes, one of Obama’s deputy national-security advisers, said. “If you were to boil it all down to a bumper sticker, it’s ‘Wind down these two wars, reestablish American standing and leadership in the world, and focus on a broader set of priorities, from Asia and the global economy to a nuclear-nonproliferation regime.’”

Obama’s lengthy bumper-sticker credo did not include a call to promote democracy or protect human rights. Obama aides who focussed on these issues were awarded lesser White House positions. Samantha Power became senior director of multilateral affairs at the N.S.C. Michael McFaul, a Stanford professor who believes that the U.S. should make democracy promotion the heart of its foreign policy, landed a middle position at the White House.

Most of the foreign-policy issues that Obama emphasized in his first two years involved stepping away from idealism.

In the hope of persuading Iran’s regime to abandon its nuclear ambitions, Obama pointedly rejected Bush’s “axis of evil” terminology. In a video message to Iranians on March 20, 2009, he respectfully addressed “the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran.” In order to engage China on economic issues, Obama didn’t press very hard on human rights. And, because any effort to push the Israelis and Palestinians toward a final settlement would benefit from help from Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, Obama was not especially outspoken about the sins of Middle Eastern autocrats and kings.

Despite the realist tilt, Obama has argued from the start that he was anti-ideological, that he defied traditional categories and ideologies. In Oslo, in December of 2009, accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, Obama said, “Within America, there has long been a tension between those who describe themselves as realists or idealists—a tension that suggests a stark choice between the narrow pursuit of interests or an endless campaign to impose our values around the world.” The speech echoed Obama’s 2002 address to an anti-war demonstration in Chicago’s Federal Plaza. In Chicago, he had confounded his leftist audience by emphasizing the need to fight some wars, but not “dumb” ones, like the one in Iraq. In Oslo, he surprised a largely left-leaning audience by talking about the martial imperatives of a Commander-in-Chief overseeing two wars. Obama’s aides often insist that he is an anti-ideological politician interested only in what actually works. He is, one says, a “consequentialist.”



Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton turned her department into something of a haven for the ideas that flourished late in the Clinton Administration. She picked Anne-Marie Slaughter as her director of policy planning—a job first held by George Kennan, in the Truman Administration. She also brought in Harold Koh, the State Department’s legal adviser and a scholar on issues concerning human rights and democracy. Walking around the mazelike building in Foggy Bottom, you get the sense that if you duck into any office you will find earnest young women

and men discussing globalization, the possibility that Facebook can topple tyrannies, and what is called "soft power," the ability to bend the world toward your view through attraction, not coercion.

Not long ago, I met with Kris Balderston, the State Department's representative for global partnerships. He started working with Clinton ten years ago, when he guided her through the politics of upstate New York during her Senate race. Now he works on an array of entrepreneurial projects that complement traditional diplomacy. He talked excitedly about working with Vietnamese-Americans to build stronger ties to Vietnam and about distributing vaccines in partnership with Coca-Cola. He pointed to a bookcase stocked with devices that looked like a cross between a lantern and a paint bucket. These were advanced cookstoves. "This is a problem that the Secretary saw when she was First Lady," Balderston said, explaining how lethal cooking smoke can be. "One half of the world cooks in open fires. Two million people die a year from it—that's more than malaria and tuberculosis combined, and nearly as much as H.I.V." On a trip to Congo in 2009, Clinton met a woman in a refugee camp who had been raped in the jungle on the outskirts of the camp while gathering wood for her stove. Telling the story at the State Department, Clinton was angrier than Balderston had ever seen her. "We have got to do something about this," she said. Balderston spends much of his time trying to build a market for inexpensive, clean-burning cookstoves in the developing world.

But Clinton's involvement in soft-power initiatives was matched by the kind of hardheadedness about foreign policy she had displayed during her Presidential campaign. She has repeatedly aligned herself with the most consistent realist in the Obama Administration: Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who was deputy national-security adviser in the first Bush Administration and Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush. Clinton's advisers told me that, during her first two years in Foggy Bottom, Clinton agreed with Gates on every major issue.

"Secretary Clinton can push the agenda she pushes because she is tough

and people know she is tough," Slaughter said. "It's very interesting—you've had three women Secretaries of State, and she's the first one who can stand up and say publicly, 'We are going to empower women and girls around the world. We are going to make development a priority of foreign policy. We are going to engage people as well as governments.'"

"Madeleine Albright believed in the importance of those issues, but she could never have made it the core of her public agenda. She was the first woman Secretary of State, which meant that she had to out-tough the tough guys. She did that on the Balkans. Condi Rice helped double foreign aid, but she was first and foremost a Cold Warrior, and she could throw around 'I.C.B.M.'s and 'S.L.B.M.'s and 'MIRV's with the best of them. That was the only way she could make it, not only as a woman in the nineteen-eighties but as an African-American woman. You had to be way tougher and way more knowledgeable about weapons than any man." A former Administration official said, "Hillary has to guard her flank. And one of the ways she guards her flank is she rarely deviates from Gates. If she and Gates both weigh in, they are much more likely to get their way."

Obama's first test at managing the clashing ideologies within his Administration came during the review of Afghanistan policy in 2009. During the campaign, Obama said that he would add troops in Afghanistan, a war, he argued, that Bush had neglected. But Obama's campaign promise bumped hard against the judgment of several new advisers, including Richard Holbrooke, who tried to convince the President that sending forty thousand more troops to Afghanistan, as the military urged, was counterproductive. It would prevent Obama from rebalancing American foreign policy toward the Pacific, and it would have little impact on Al Qaeda, which is based largely in Pakistan. Obama had appointed Holbrooke his Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Holbrooke, a brash and influential diplomat, found himself in the unusual circumstance of being ignored. He wanted to send far fewer troops and reenergize regional diplomacy, including reconciliation talks

with the Taliban. He believed that the lesson of Vietnam was that the diplomats, rather than the generals, needed to be in charge, but he could rarely penetrate the insular world of Obama's White House to make that case to the President.

Holbrooke had been a devoted supporter of Hillary Clinton during the Presidential campaign, and she protected him from Obama aides who viewed with suspicion his sizable ego and stream of positive press clippings. When a top official at the White House tried to push Holbrooke out, in early 2010, Clinton intervened on his behalf. But Holbrooke still could not get a one-on-one meeting with the President. And at the crucial national-security meetings on Afghanistan Clinton did not adopt Holbrooke's views. She sided with Gates and the generals in calling for the maximum number of soldiers to surge into Afghanistan. Obama agreed to send thirty thousand more troops, although he insisted that they would start coming home in July, 2011. Holbrooke's widow, the writer Kati Marton, who has been reviewing her husband's memos and archives, told me that they "tell a dramatic story of a fractured relationship between the State Department and White House."

On December 11, 2010, while meeting with Clinton at the State Department, Holbrooke suffered a split aorta, and he died forty-eight hours later. Bill Clinton spoke at Holbrooke's memorial service, held on January 14th at the Kennedy Center. "I loved the guy—because he could *do*," Clinton said. "Doing in diplomacy saves lives." He went on, "And I never did understand how people would let a little rough edges, which to me was so obvious what he was doing, it was so obvious why he felt the way he did—I could never understand people who didn't appreciate him." Several people told Marton they thought that Bill Clinton was sending a message to Obama.

In the end, Obama made a decision about Afghanistan that was at odds with his own goal of rebalancing toward Asia and the Pacific. "The U.S. has been on a greater Middle East detour largely of its own choosing through a war of choice in Iraq and what became a war of choice in 2009 in Afghanistan," Haass said. "Afghanistan is entirely inconsistent with

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, a former aide says, can push her agenda "because she is tough and people know she is tough."



the focus of time and resources on Asia. If your goal is to reorient or refocus or rebalance U.S. policy, the Administration's commitment to so doing is at the moment more rhetorical than actual."

Obama came into office emphasizing bureaucratic efficiency, which he believed would lead to wise rulings. But the Afghanistan decision, like all government work, was driven by politics and ideology. Obama's eagerness to keep his campaign promise, the military's

view that reducing troops meant a loss of face, Clinton's decision to align with Gates, and Holbrooke's inability to influence the White House staff all ultimately conspired to push Obama toward the surge.

Obama's other key campaign promise—to engage with the leaders of countries hostile to the U.S.—sometimes meant deemphasizing democracy and human rights, which had been

tainted by Bush's "freedom agenda" in the Middle East. Tyrannical regimes are less likely to make deals with you if you talk persistently about overthrowing them. Obama's speech in Cairo, delivered on June 4, 2009, and devoted to improving America's relationship with the Muslim world, was organized as a list of regional priorities. He discussed the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Arab-Israeli peace, and Iran's nuclear ambitions. He then gave a hesitant endorse-

ment of America's commitment to democracy in the region. He began, "I know there has been controversy about the promotion of democracy in recent years, and much of this controversy is connected to the war in Iraq. So let me be clear: no system of government can or should be imposed upon one nation by any other."

A week later, however, a disputed Presidential election in Iran triggered large demonstrations there, which were soon labelled the Green Revolution. For the first five months after his Inauguration, Obama had tried to engage with the regime of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in an effort to persuade Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions. Now he faced the choice between keeping his distance and coming to the aid of the nascent pro-democracy movement, which was rallying behind Mir-Hossein Mousavi, who had finished second behind Ahmadinejad. Obama chose to keep his distance, providing only mild rhetorical support. In an interview with CNBC after the protests began, he said that "the difference between Ahmadinejad and Mousavi in terms of their actual policies may not be as great as has been advertised."

During the peak of the protests in Iran, Jared Cohen, a young staffer at the State Department who worked for Slaughter, contacted officials at Twitter and asked the company not to perform a planned upgrade that would have shut

down the service temporarily in Iran, where protesters were using it to get information to the international media. The move violated Obama's rule of non-interference.

White House officials "were so mad that somebody had actually 'interfered' in Iranian politics, because they were doing their damndest to not interfere," the former Administration official said. "Now, to be fair to them, it was also the understanding that if we interfered it could look like the Green movement was Western-backed, but that really wasn't the core of it. The core of it was we were still trying to engage the Iranian government and we did not want to do anything that made us side with the protesters. To the Secretary's credit, she realized, I think, before other people, that this is ridiculous, that we had to change our line." The official said that Cohen "almost lost his job over it. If it had been up to the White House, they would have fired him."

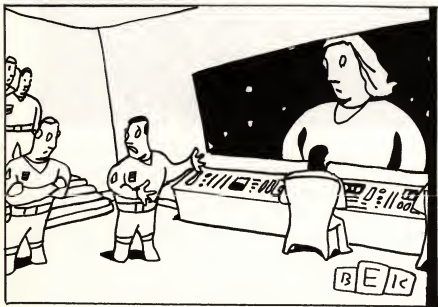
Clinton did not betray any disagreement with the President over Iran policy, but in an interview with me she cited Cohen's action with pride. "When it came to the elections, we had a lot of messages from people inside Iran and their supporters outside of Iran saying, 'For heaven's sakes, don't claim this as part of the democracy agenda. This is indigenous to us. We are struggling against this tyrannical regime. If you are

too outspoken in our support, we will lose legitimacy!' Now, that's a tough balancing act. It's easy to stand up if you don't worry about the consequences. Now, we were very clear in saying, 'We are supporting those who are protesting peacefully,' and we put our social-media gurus at work in trying to keep connections going, so that we helped to provide that base for communicating that was necessary for the demonstrations."

One suggestion that came up in interviews with Obama's current and former foreign-policy advisers was that the Administration's policy debates sometimes broke down along gender lines. The realists who view foreign policy as a great chess game—and who want to focus on China and India—are usually men. The idealists, who talk about democracy and human rights, are often women. (White House officials told me that this critique is outlandish.)

Slaughter, who admired Clinton but felt alienated by people at the White House, resigned in February, and in her farewell speech at the State Department she described a gender divide at the heart of Obama's foreign-policy team. She argued that in the twenty-first century America needed to focus on societies as well as on states. "Unfortunately, the people who focus on those two worlds here in Washington are still often very different groups. The world of states is still the world of high politics, hard power, realpolitik, and, largely, men," she said. "The world of societies is still too often the world of low politics, soft power, human rights, democracy, and development, and, largely, women. One of the best parts of my two years here has been the opportunity to work with so many amazing and talented women—truly extraordinary people. But Washington still has a ways to go before their voices are fully heard and respected."

On August 12, 2010, Obama sent a five-page memorandum called "Political Reform in the Middle East and North Africa" to Vice-President Joseph Biden, Clinton, Gates, Donilon, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the other senior members of his foreign-policy team. Though the Iranian regime had effectively crushed the Green Revolution, the country was still experiencing sporadic protests. Egypt



"Captain, we're headed straight toward a big gaping hole of needs!"

would face crucial parliamentary elections in November. The memo began with a stark conclusion about trends in the region.

"Progress toward political reform and openness in the Middle East and North Africa lags behind other regions and has, in some cases, stalled," the President wrote. He noted that even the more liberal countries were cracking down on public gatherings, the press, and political opposition groups. But something was stirring. There was "evidence of growing citizen discontent with the region's regimes," he wrote. It was likely that "if present trends continue," allies there would "opt for repression rather than reform to manage domestic dissent."

Obama's analysis showed a desire to balance interests and ideals. The goals of reform and democracy were couched in the language of U.S. interests rather than the sharp moral language that statesmen often use in public. "Increased repression could threaten the political and economic stability of some of our allies, leave us with fewer capable, credible partners who can support our regional priorities, and further alienate citizens in the region," Obama wrote. "Moreover, our regional and international credibility will be undermined if we are seen or perceived to be backing repressive regimes and ignoring the rights and aspirations of citizens."

Obama instructed his staff to come up with "tailored," "country by country" strategies on political reform. He told his advisers to challenge the traditional idea that stability in the Middle East always served U.S. interests. Obama wanted to weigh the risks of both "continued support for increasingly unpopular and repressive regimes" and a "strong push by the United States for reform."

He also wrote that "the advent of political succession in a number of countries offers a potential opening for political reform in the region." If the United States managed the coming transitions "poorly," it "could have negative implications for U.S. interests, including for our standing among Arab publics."

The review was led by three N.S.C. staffers: Samantha Power, Gayle Smith, who works on development issues, and Dennis Ross, a Middle East expert with a broad portfolio in the White House. Soon, they and officials from other agen-



"Why do you always have to be so paternalistic?"

cies were sitting in the White House, debating the costs and benefits of supporting autocrats. A White House official involved said the group studied "the taboos, all the questions you're not supposed to ask." For example, they tested the assumption that the President could not publicly criticize President Hosni Mubarak because it would jeopardize Egypt's cooperation on issues related to Israel or its assistance in tracking terrorists. Not true, they concluded: the Egyptians pursued peace with Israel and crushed terrorists because it was in their interest to do so, not because the U.S. asked them to.

They tested the idea that countries with impoverished populations needed to develop economically before they were prepared for open political systems—a common argument that democracy promoters often run up against. Again, they concluded that the conventional wisdom was wrong. "All roads led to political reform," the White House official said.

The group was just finishing its work, on December 17th, when Mohamed Bouazizi, a vegetable vender in Tunisia, set himself on fire outside a municipal building to protest the corruption of the country's political system—an act that in-

spired protests in Tunisia and, eventually, the entire region. Democracy in the Middle East, one of the most fraught issues of the Bush years, was suddenly the signature conflict of Obama's foreign policy.

On January 25th, the first, crucial day of the protests in Egypt, and eleven days after the removal of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, in Tunisia, Secretary Clinton declared her support for free assembly, but added, "Our assessment is that the Egyptian government is stable and is looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people." That evening, Obama delivered his State of the Union address, in which he praised the demonstrators in Tunisia, "where the will of the people proved more powerful than the writ of a dictator," and expressed support for the "democratic aspirations of all people." But he did not mention Egypt. Shady el-Ghazaly Harb, one of the leaders of the coalition that started the Egyptian revolution, told me that the message the protesters got from the Obama Administration on the first day of the revolution was "Go home. We need this regime."

A number of familiar ex-diplomats and politicians, led by Dick Cheney,



P. BYRNES.

"Will you be putting her in day care or bringing her up artisanally?"

Henry Kissinger, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, criticized the treatment of Mubarak, and Israel and Saudi Arabia called on the Administration to stick with him. But, as the protests strengthened, it became clear that Mubarak was doomed. According to a senior Administration official, "The question in our mind was 'How do you manage that?'"

Obama's instinct was to try to have it both ways. He wanted to position the United States on the side of the protesters: it's always a good idea, politically, to support brave young men and women risking their lives for freedom, especially when their opponent is an eighty-two-year-old dictator with Swiss bank accounts. Some of Obama's White House aides regretted having stood idly by while the Iranian regime brutally suppressed the Green Revolution; Egypt offered a second chance. Nonetheless, Obama wanted to assure other autocratic allies that the U.S. did not hastily abandon its friends, and he feared that the uprising could spin out of control. "Look at all the revolutions in history, especially the ones that are driven from the ground up, and they tend to be very chaotic and hard to find an equilibrium," one senior official said. The French Revolution, for instance, he said, "ended up in chaos, and they ended up with

Bonaparte." Obama's ultimate position, it seemed, was to talk like an idealist while acting like a realist.

This wasn't an easy balance to maintain, and the first major problem arose when State Department officials learned that if Mubarak stepped down immediately, the Egyptian constitution would require a Presidential election in sixty days, long before any of the moderate parties could get organized. Egyptian officials warned the Administration that it could lead to the Muslim Brotherhood's taking over power. "My daughter gets to go out at night," Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Egypt's then foreign minister, told Secretary Clinton during one conversation. "And, God damn it, I'm not going to turn this country over to people who will turn back the clock on her rights."

Obama decided not to call for Mubarak to step down. Instead, the U.S. would encourage a transition led by Mubarak's newly installed Vice-President, Omar Suleiman. The strategy was to avoid the constitutional process that the State Department feared would lead to chaos. The senior official told me in the midst of the crisis, "I don't think that because a group of young people get on the street that we are obliged to be for them."

On January 29th, the White House

made two major decisions: the U.S. would announce that it supported a transition in Egypt, and Obama would send an emissary to Mubarak to explain that, in the judgment of the United States, he could not survive the protests. The emissary would tell Mubarak that his best option was to try to leave a positive legacy by steering the country toward a real democratic transformation. Frank G. Wisner, the former U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, who has long known Mubarak well, would deliver the message. The next day, Clinton appeared on five Sunday-morning talk shows to announce that Obama supported an "orderly transition" in Egypt. That afternoon, Wisner boarded a U.S. government plane for Cairo.

On January 31st, Wisner met with Mubarak in Cairo. The next day, word leaked out that Mubarak would address the country. That afternoon, Obama's national-security advisers met in the Situation Room to discuss two issues: whether Obama should call Mubarak and whether Obama should make a public statement. Obama joined the meeting unexpectedly. As the discussion continued, Mubarak's speech appeared on television, and the President and his aides paused to watch. "I am now careful to conclude my work for Egypt by presenting Egypt to the next government in a constitutional way which will protect Egypt," Mubarak said. "I want to say, in clear terms, that in the next few months that are remaining of my current reign I will work very hard to carry out all the necessary measures to transfer power."

In Tahrir Square, the protesters erupted in rage at the meandering and confusing speech. Obama now seemed to be uncomfortable taking an attitude of cool detachment from the people in the street. He called Mubarak, and tried to find a graceful way for the Egyptian President to exit that would also take care of the constitutional concerns Egyptian officials kept raising. He asked Mubarak if there was a way to alter the constitution to allow for a stable transition. He asked if there was a way to set up a caretaker government. A White House official summarized Mubarak's response as: "Muslim Brotherhood, Muslim Brotherhood, Muslim Brotherhood."

Obama then made a public state-

ment that was more confrontational: "An orderly transition must be meaningful, it must be peaceful, and it must begin now." The urgent message alienated Israel and Saudi Arabia, among other allies. It also startled some people in the State Department. Clinton "walked a very narrow line and managed to do it without making the Egyptians too angry on either side," a senior State Department official said. "After the President gave his statement, the people surrounding Mubarak began to get quite angry."

The inherent contradictions of an Administration trying to simultaneously encourage and contain the forces of revolution in Egypt broke into the open on February 5th, when Wisner, who was then in New York, participated via videoconference in an international-affairs conference in Munich. After outlining the constitutional argument for keeping Mubarak in power, he said, "I therefore believe that President Mubarak's continued leadership is critical; it's his opportunity to write his own legacy. He's given sixty years of his life to the service of his country." According to friends, Wisner, who had talked with Obama before he went to Cairo, believed that his statement was consistent with the policy he was told to follow.

Clinton was at the conference in Munich, and, shortly after Wisner made his remarks, a senior Administration official gathered the press corps traveling with her in a small dining room at the Charles Hotel to brief us on the Secretary's meetings. The official hadn't heard Wisner's comments, but when a reporter read a long excerpt off his BlackBerry the official blanched, his mouth agape.

"Wisner," the official said, "was not speaking for the U.S. government or the Obama Administration. He was speaking as a private citizen."

The public and private components of the Administration's Egypt policy were at odds, and Wisner had risked blowing everything up. His tenure as an envoy was over. "They threw me under the bus," a close friend remembers him saying.

Wisner referred dismissively to the "relection committee" at the White House, according to the friend. But in this case Obama's political interests—

needing to be seen as on the side of the protesters—aligned with the policy views of the idealists. An Obama adviser declared, "Obama didn't give the Tahrir Square crowds every last thing they sought from him at the precise moment they sought it. But he went well beyond what many of America's allies in the region wished to see."

In March, I travelled to Cairo with Secretary Clinton. One evening, she was scheduled to meet with Egyptians who had been prominent in the protests that brought down Mubarak. However, one group, called the Coalition of Youth Revolution, which includes leaders from the activist movements and opposition parties in Egypt, boycotted the meeting. As Clinton talked with other civil-society members upstairs at the Four Seasons Hotel, four members of the abstaining coalition agreed to talk with me and three other journalists in the lobby.

I asked why they weren't upstairs with the Secretary of State. "Hillary was against the revolution from the beginning to the last day, O.K.?" Mohammed Abbas, of the Muslim Brotherhood, said. "Obama supported this revolution. She was against."

Abbas and Shady el-Ghazaly Harb, a member of the liberal Democratic Front Party, said that if Obama was upstairs they would meet with him. Abbas lit up at the idea. "We respect Obama's attitude toward our revolution, and when we were in Tahrir Square we were following all of the leaders all over the world and what were their views," Abbas said.

"His speeches were more understanding and more appreciative of what we were doing, especially his second one," el-Ghazaly Harb said, referring to Obama's demand that the transition "begin now." He added, "We were in Tahrir Square and people were cheering

for Obama's speech, because they felt he was saying that we"—America—"were inspired by the Egyptian people and we understand what the teen-agers were saying. Maybe he's using us, but that's what I see."

Later, when I relayed these comments to Clinton, she told me she didn't take the snub personally. She said, "Many years ago, I was active against the Vietnam War, and I was involved in all kinds of student politics, and so I understand there's always a full range of people in movements like this. And I remember refusing to meet with people." She was unmoved by the fact that these protesters had been integral to starting the revolution. "The people who start revolutions may or may not be the people who actually end up governing countries."

The activists she did meet with were not as organized as she had hoped. "As incredibly emotional and moving and inspiring as it was," she said, speaking of the demonstrations, "I looked at these twenty young people around the table, and they were complaining about how the elections are going to be held, and the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamists are so well organized, and the remnants of the old National Democratic Party are so well organized. I said, 'So, well, are you organizing? Do you have an umbrella group that is going to represent the youth of Egypt? Do you have a political agenda?' And they all looked up and said no. It made my heart sink."

On March 16th, Clinton flew from Cairo to Tunis to continue her tour of revolutionary North Africa. The route took us over the Mediterranean just off the coast of Libya. The G.P.S. maps in the cabin of Clinton's Air Force plane lit up with the name "Benghazi," reminding everyone that, on the ground, Muammar Qaddafi's men were marching on that city. Earlier in the day, Qaddafi had gone on the radio to warn the citizens of Benghazi. "It's over. We are coming tonight," he said. "We will find you in your closets."

Protesters had started to gather in Benghazi on February 15th. Qaddafi's security forces reacted with violence four days later, firing on a crowd of some twenty thousand demonstrators in Ben-



ghazi and killing at least a hundred of them. On February 26th, the United Nations passed a resolution that placed an arms embargo and economic sanctions on the Libyan regime and referred Qaddafi to the International Criminal Court. Two days later, the U.S., through lobbying led by Clinton and Power, helped remove Libya from its seat on the U.N. Human Rights Council. By tightening an economic noose around Qaddafi and isolating him diplomatically, Obama and the international community were beginning to use the tools that Power had outlined in "A Problem from Hell."

The debate then narrowed to whether the United States and others should intervene militarily. The principal option was to set up a no-fly zone to prevent Libyan planes from attacking the protest movement, which had quickly turned into a full-scale rebellion based in the eastern half of the country. The decision about intervention in Libya was an unusually clear choice between interests and values. "Of all the countries in the region there, our real interests in Libya are minimal," Brent Scowcroft told me. For a President whose long-term goal was to extricate the U.S. from Middle East conflicts, it was an especially vexing debate.

Within the Administration, Robert Gates, the Defense Secretary, was the

most strenuous opponent of establishing a no-fly zone, or any other form of military intervention. Like Scowcroft, Gates objected to intervention because he did not think it was in the United States' vital interest. He also pointed out a fact that many people didn't seem to understand: the first step in creating a no-fly zone would be to bomb the Libyan air defenses. Clinton disagreed with him and argued the case for intervention with Obama. It was the first major issue on which she and Gates had different views.

The days leading up to Obama's decision were perplexing to outsiders. American Presidents usually lead the response to world crises, but Obama seemed to stay hidden that week. From the outside, it looked as though the French were dragging him into the conflict. On March 14th, Clinton arrived in Paris, but she had no firm decision to convey. According to a French official, when Clinton met with President Nicolas Sarkozy she declined to endorse the no-fly zone, which Sarkozy interpreted as American reluctance to do anything. "We started to wonder where, exactly, the Administration was going," the official said.

Late that evening, at her suite at the Westin hotel in Paris, Clinton met for forty-five minutes with Mahmoud Jibril, a representative from the Libyan

opposition. I waited in the lobby with a number of reporters, hoping to talk to Jibril after the meeting. But all we got was Bernard-Henri Lévy, the French philosopher, who had taken up the cause of the Libyan opposition and was shepherding Jibril to his meetings with diplomats. We later learned that Jibril was dejected by Clinton's unwillingness to commit to the no-fly zone and, not wanting to face the press, left the hotel by another exit.

The next evening, Obama held a meeting in the Situation Room. By then, it had become clear that the rebels, who had once seemed on the verge of sweeping Qaddafi out of power, were weak, and poorly armed; they had lost almost all the gains of the previous days. In New York, the Lebanese, the French, and the United Kingdom had prepared a U.N. resolution to implement a no-fly zone, and the world was waiting to see if Obama would join the effort. The White House meeting opened with an assessment of the situation on the ground in Libya. Qaddafi's forces were on the outskirts of Ajdabiyah, which supplies water and fuel to Benghazi. "The President was told Qaddafi is going to retake Ajdabiyah in twenty-four hours," a White House official who was in the meeting said. "And then the last stop on the train is Benghazi. If he got there, he would complete the military offensive, and that could be the place where he goes house to house and where a massacre could occur."

Obama asked if a no-fly zone would prevent that grim scenario. His intelligence and military advisers said no. Qaddafi was using tanks, not war planes, to crush the rebellion. Obama asked his aides to come up with some more robust military options, and left for dinner. At a second meeting that night, he was presented with the option of pushing for a broader resolution that would allow for the U.S. to protect the Libyan rebels by bombing government forces. He instructed Susan Rice, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., to pursue that option.

On March 17th, I interviewed Clinton in Tunis. She was sitting under a canopy by the hotel pool, eating breakfast. Although she had been noncommittal with the diplomats in France two

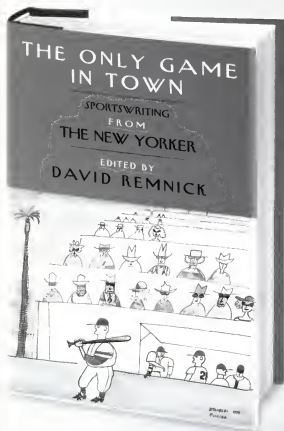


"Showing up is half the losing battle."

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ON SALE NOW IN HARDCOVER

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Ryan Lizza takes questions from readers.

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The days leading up to the decision were perplexing to American Presidents usual response to world crises, it seemed to stay hidden that the outside, it looked as if French were dragging him into conflict. On March 14th, she arrived in Paris, but she had no mission to convey. According to an official, when Clinton met with Nicolas Sarkozy she endorsed the no-fly zone, which she interpreted as American reluctance to do anything. "We started to work exactly, the Administration the official said.

Late that evening, at her Westin hotel in Paris, Clinton forty-five minutes with M. Ibrahim, a representative from

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"Showing up is half the losing battle."

days earlier, she now made it clear that the Obama Administration had made a decision. It was well known that she favored intervention, but she was frank about the difficulty in making such decisions. "I get up every morning and I look around the world," she said. "People are being killed in Côte d'Ivoire, they're being killed in the Eastern Congo, they're being oppressed and abused all over the world by dictators and really unsavory characters. So we could be intervening all over the place. But that is not a—what is the standard? Is the standard, you know, a leader who won't leave office in Ivory Coast and is killing his own people? Gee, that sounds familiar. So part of it is having to make tough choices and wanting to help the international community accept responsibility."

Clinton insisted that the U.S. had to have regional support before it took action, and emphasized that it was crucial that U.N. action had been supported by the Arab League. "So now we're going to see whether the Security Council will support the Arab League. Not support the United States—support the Arab League. That is a significant difference. And for those who want to see the United States always acting unilaterally, it's not satisfying. But, for the world we're trying to build, where we have a lot of responsible actors who are willing to step up and lead, it is exactly what we should be doing."

The French and the British were shocked by the quick turn of events. Instead of the President announcing the Administration's position from the East Room of the White House, the U.N. envoy quietly proposed transforming a tepid resolution for a no-fly zone into a permission for full-scale military intervention in Libya. Some officials thought it was a trick. Was it possible that the Americans were trying to make the military options appear so bleak that China and Russia would be sure to block action?

Gradually, it became clear that the U.S. was serious. Clinton spoke with her Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, who had previously told her that Russia would "never never" support even a no-fly zone. The Russians agreed to abstain. Without the cover of the Russians, the Chinese almost never veto Security

Council resolutions. The vote, on March 17th, was 10-0, with five abstentions. It was the first time in its sixty-six years that the United Nations authorized military action to preempt an "imminent massacre." Tom Malinowski, the Washington director of Human Rights Watch, wrote, "It was, by any objective standard, the most rapid multinational military response to an impending human rights crisis in history."

As the bombs dropped on Libyan tanks, President Obama made a point of continuing his long-scheduled trip to South America. He wanted to show that America has interests in the rest of the world, even as it was drawn into yet another crisis in the Middle East.

This spring, Obama officials often expressed impatience with questions about theory or about the elusive quest for an Obama doctrine. One senior Administration official reminded me what the former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said when asked what was likely to set the course of his government: "Events, dear boy, events."

Obama has emphasized bureaucratic efficiency over ideology, and approached foreign policy as if it were case law, deciding his response to every threat or crisis on its own merits. "When you start applying blanket policies on the complexities of the current world situation, you're going to get yourself into trouble," he said in a recent interview with NBC News.

Obama's reluctance to articulate a grand synthesis has alienated both realists and idealists. "On issues like whether to intervene in Libya there's really not a compromise and consensus," Slaughter said. "You can't be a little bit realist and a little bit democratic when deciding whether or not to stop a massacre."

Brzezinski, too, has become disillusioned with the President. "I greatly admire his insights and understanding. I don't think he really has a policy that's implementing those insights and understandings. The rhetoric is always terribly imperative and categorical: 'You must do this,' 'He must do that,' 'This is unacceptable.'" Brzezinski added, "He doesn't strategize. He sermonizes."

The one consistent thread running through most of Obama's decisions has been that America must act humbly in

the world. Unlike his immediate predecessors, Obama came of age politically during the post-Cold War era, a time when America's unmatched power created widespread resentment. Obama believes that highly visible American leadership can taint a foreign-policy goal just as easily as it can bolster it. In 2007, Obama said, "America must show—through deeds as well as words—that we stand with those who seek a better life. That child looking up at the helicopter must see America and feel hope."

In 2009 and early 2010, Obama was sometimes criticized for not acting at all. He was cautious during Iran's Green Revolution and deferential to his generals during the review of Afghanistan strategy. But his response to the Arab Spring has been bolder. He broke with Mubarak at a point when some of the older establishment advised against it. In Libya, he overruled Gates and his military advisers and pushed our allies to adopt a broad and risky intervention. It is too early to know the consequences of these decisions. Libya appears to be entering a protracted civil war; American policy toward Mubarak frightened—and irritated—Saudi Arabia, where instability could send oil prices soaring. The U.S. keeps getting stuck in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, Obama may be moving toward something resembling a doctrine. One of his advisers described the President's actions in Libya as "leading from behind." That's not a slogan designed for signs at the 2012 Democratic Convention, but it does accurately describe the balance that Obama now seems to be finding. It's a different definition of leadership than America is known for, and it comes from two unspoken beliefs: that the relative power of the U.S. is declining, as rivals like China rise, and that the U.S. is reviled in many parts of the world. Pursuing our interests and spreading our ideals thus requires stealth and modesty as well as military strength. "It's so at odds with the John Wayne expectation for what America is in the world," the adviser said. "But it's necessary for shepherding us through this phase." ♦

THE MARK

The F.B.I. needs informants, but what happens when they go too far?

BY EVAN RATLIFF

Last January, Michael Grimm, a forty-year-old United States congressman from Staten Island, sat for an interview in his Washington office with Greta Van Susteren, of Fox News. Grimm, a freshman representative who had recently been named to the House Financial Services Committee, is a former marine and F.B.I. agent. He has blue eyes and perfectly combed dark hair. An American flag was positioned behind him. Van Susteren quickly turned the conversation to the eleven years that he had spent at the F.B.I., which had been the centerpiece of his campaign. "You went undercover?" she asked. "Deep undercover, yes," Grimm said. He was, he added, "the first and only F.B.I. agent to successfully infiltrate Wall Street."

Van Susteren asked him if he had ever slipped and revealed his true identity. "Not once," he said, smiling. He then described the rigors of undercover work. "People think the F.B.I. goes out with this big net, and whoever gets caught up in it, but that's not how it works. We do a tremendous amount of investigating before we are out there as an undercover. So we know the crimes they've committed in advance." When she introduced the segment for her live audience, Van Susteren said, "Our next guest sounds more like James Bond than a congressman."

Grimm started working as an F.B.I. agent in 1995. His "most notable case," as he described it to Van Susteren, was called Wooden Nickel, and it began in 2002. Working out of a corner office in the World Financial Center, Grimm adopted the persona of Michael Garibaldi—nicknamed Mikey Suits, for his impeccable dress—a Mob-connected stock and currency trader who ran a hedge fund called Centurion Consulting. The main investigation concerned a company that was suspected of illegally manipulating currency markets. Some months into the case, the F.B.I. added a

further target: Albert Santoro, a thirty-one-year-old lawyer from Queens, who had recently come into contact with a man named Josef von Habsburg, one of the Bureau's more colorful—and complicated—paid informants.

Von Habsburg, whose full name was Josef Franz Prach von Habsburg-Lothringen, was in his early forties and was known to his acquaintances as an international businessman and the heir to an Austrian royal fortune. He spoke with a vaguely European accent and wore blocky designer eyeglasses and flashy three-piece suits. He would talk of spending weekends skiing in Switzerland or visiting family castles in Croatia. Von Habsburg claimed to be well connected in the financial industry, and he was a regular source of tips and targets for the F.B.I.'s New York office. He handed off potential criminals to undercover agents, like Grimm, who ran stings and busted them as they committed illegal acts.

Santoro, von Habsburg's mark on this occasion, was a stocky man with slicked-back hair. He had been an amateur race-car driver, gone to law school, and become a Brooklyn district attorney. Now he ran a solo legal practice downtown, and he was struggling. For months after September 11th, his office had been cordoned off. He lost business and fell tens of thousands of dollars behind on car payments, credit-card debts, and rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Queens. His wife worked as a bartender four nights a week. He was desperate for clients.

Santoro had met von Habsburg through a mutual friend in September, 2002, at a night club. Afterward, von Habsburg treated him to a series of extravagant meals at the Four Seasons and the Waldorf, and told him about his global empire of hotels and other businesses. Von Habsburg flattered Santoro about his business acumen, and said that he wanted to hire him to help restructure

his companies. Von Habsburg promised Santoro a luxury apartment and a Ferrari. "He said he was going to 'make me' in New York," Santoro recalled.

In mid-October, von Habsburg arranged to introduce Santoro to Grimm, posing as Garibaldi. The three met for lunch at the St. Regis Hotel, and Santoro commented on Garibaldi's polished bearing. "You look like a federal agent," he observed. Von Habsburg called Garibaldi his "right-hand man" and the "brains" responsible for his foreign-currency business. Santoro admitted to Garibaldi that he knew little about currency exchange. ("I thought he was talking about those little places at the airport," Santoro told me later.) But, when he mentioned that he had helped a German musician open bank accounts in the U.S., Garibaldi seemed interested.

Santoro began going to meetings at Garibaldi's office at the World Financial Center, and, before long, Garibaldi was speaking openly about transferring money overseas illegally. Santoro, eager to impress, made audacious claims, which the F.B.I. captured on tape. He told Garibaldi that he could wire money to Central and South America without it being traced. He said he could convert cash into gold and smuggle it out of the country in special shipping containers. Through the fall, he continued meeting with von Habsburg as well, generally in strip clubs, night clubs, and fancy restaurants. The Prince, as Santoro began calling him, told him not to take Garibaldi's talk seriously. "We were all trying to outdo and out-bullshit each other," Santoro recalled. He had a sense that something was wrong, but he was enjoying the life style and saw no reason to extricate himself. "We'd be sitting there like kings in a night club, drinking Cristal," he said. "It wasn't costing me anything."

In November, 2002, Garibaldi told Santoro that a friend who sold steroids had a hundred thousand dollars in cash

JOHN RITTER



Josef von Habsburg, center, a confidential informant, worked with the F.B.I. undercover agent Michael Grimm, left.

that he needed to transfer out of the country. In late December, Garibaldi suddenly informed Santoro that he'd obtained the money. Garibaldi took it in a leather suitcase to Santoro's office. They counted it, and Santoro locked it in a cabinet.

A week later, Garibaldi returned to pick up brochures that Santoro had acquired describing how to legally open overseas bank accounts. After he left, Santoro's intern, a student at New York Law School, said she recognized Garibaldi. "That guy's not a stockbroker," she told Santoro. "He went to law school with me." His real name, she said, was Michael Grimm.

Santoro called Garibaldi to confront him. The F.B.I. agent, who had attended law school at night under his real name, said the intern was mistaken. "She doesn't know me," he told Santoro.

That night, five F.B.I. agents knocked on Santoro's apartment door, then threatened to break it down. When Santoro opened it, they tackled him, handcuffed him, and drove him to the Metropolitan Correctional Center, where he was charged with laundering a hundred thousand dollars in drug-trafficking proceeds.

"He was arrested early," Grimm told me. Santoro's knowledge of Grimm's true identity "could have jeopardized" the rest of the operation. While Santoro remained in jail for five months awaiting bail, Grimm continued working on Wooden Nickel, which culminated in dozens of arrests for rigging currency trades and defrauding investors. In a press conference announcing the bust, an assistant director of the F.B.I. singled out Grimm for praise, citing his "dedication, sacrifice, and commitment to the cause."

Most of the defendants pleaded guilty. But there were hints that something was amiss in the Santoro case. Prosecutors claimed that he had laundered millions of dollars. When a judge asked, at Santoro's bail hearing, why there wasn't more evidence of that contention, the prosecutor replied that "there obviously is none because—we'd submit because it's been done successfully."

Santoro chose to fight the charges. The case would dramatically alter his future, as well as that of the informant

who had joined forces with Michael Grimm: Josef von Habsburg. It also raised questions about just how much the F.B.I. can control its confidential informants—and how much those informants can control the F.B.I.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation maintains more than fifteen thousand "confidential human sources." The Drug Enforcement Administration has its own tipsters, as do the Secret Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; over all, the Justice Department pays informants as much as a hundred million dollars a year. Trained agents like Grimm generally create new identities for their jobs, and spend months or years building up connections and gaining the trust of criminals. Confidential informants like von Habsburg simply operate within their normal lives.

Informants are especially valuable because they can collect evidence that would require court orders if they were government agents. In almost every successful case against a large-scale criminal enterprise—from the one against John Gotti's Mob operation to those involving terrorists plotting against New York synagogues and subways—an informant has played a central role. "The human-source program is the lifeblood of the F.B.I.," an assistant director of the Bureau told a congressional hearing in 2007.

Useful C.I.s are often paid thousands of dollars, and sometimes hundreds of thousands, in retainers. For certain crimes, such as those related to drug trafficking and money laundering, informants can make as much as twenty-five per cent of confiscated proceeds. "The entrepreneurial nature of informants makes them dangerous," Alexandra Natapoff, a professor at Loyola Law School, in Los Angeles, said. "We see time and time again that informants not only are capable of ginning up business for themselves and the government but have deep motivations to do so."

Other informants are accused criminals who, in exchange for leniency, agree to assist the government by turning on their fellow-conspirators. An informant might also suspect that he'll have future legal problems for which government help might come in handy. Such agree-

ments aren't formalized, but criminals are aware of the advantage of knowing a friendly law-enforcement agent. "They are acquiring this information either for their own benefit or to rat out the competition," Kenneth Walton, a retired F.B.I. agent and a former deputy assistant director of the Bureau's New York office, said. "And simultaneously they've ingratiated themselves with the government, as a buffer, so someone down the road will come to their aid."

Law-enforcement agencies have gone to considerable—and sometimes illegal—lengths to protect well-placed informants. And the agents who work closely with them risk forming friendships that can favor protecting the source over solving the crime. In 1999, it was revealed that two F.B.I. agents had for many years helped the Boston gangster Whitey Bulger, who was working as an informant, cover up crimes and avoid arrest. "You work with a source, you need the source for your case, and you develop a bond and a friendship," one former F.B.I. agent said. "You start to think of them more as a friend, rather than as a source."

Courts and cops have long recognized that criminals often make the best C.I.s. "You don't get productive informants out of a monastery," Walton said. "You have to step back and realize that they are basically con men. They are conning their own associates, and you have to say, 'If this guy is going to con and lie to his friends, why not me?'"

In October, 2005, Albert Santoro's defense team hired Steven Rambam, a private investigator in his mid-forties. The team was particularly interested in learning more about von Habsburg. "There's a guy claiming to be the Prince of Austria who is the primary witness," Santoro's lawyer, Jack Litman, told Rambam. "We'd like you to find him, because nobody knows who he is."

Rambam has short, dark-brown hair, an angular face, and a Brooklyn accent. In the world of private eyes, he is something like an investigative Charles Barkley: brash, controversial, and good at his job. He is well known for having tracked down fraudsters and former Nazi war criminals for network-television news shows.

In his search for von Habsburg,

Rambam looked through private and public databases that covered everything from credit information to property records. Finding little about the man's past, he suspected that von Habsburg was a pseudonym. People who change identities tend to carry details from their previous lives to their new ones. "What saved us was the way that this guy spells his name," Rambam told me. Scanning for public records under the Germanically styled "Josef," he identified a man who had grown up in Michigan with the same first name and the same approximate age as von Habsburg. His last name was Meyers.

It wasn't much to go on, but Rambam got in touch with a P.I. friend in Detroit named Robert Kowalkowski and went to Michigan. They dug up documents across the state, hunted down Josef Meyers's friends and family, and quickly determined that von Habsburg and Meyers were the same man. They also found, in the magazine *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, a 1995 article about early Internet scams detailing how a Josef von Habsburg had disappeared with more than a hundred thousand dollars in investments for a hedge fund that he had solicited. The case had never been prosecuted. The P.I.s now realized that they were chasing someone who was both an F.B.I. informant and a con man.

Josef Meyers was born in Highland Park, Michigan, in 1960, and grew up in a modest ranch house in Birmingham, a suburb of Detroit. His parents divorced, and he and his brother lived with their mother, a Ford employee who had emigrated from Eastern Europe. Their father moved to Illinois and became a farmer.

In his late teens and his twenties, Meyers began to have problems with the law. His crimes included car theft, forgery, drug possession, and intimidation. He was arrested several times in Michigan. After a crime spree in Florida, he was sentenced to four years' probation there. He spent a few terms at colleges in Michigan, dropped out, and moved back home. One evening, his mother called the police to report that Josef was threatening her. "When we pulled up, she said, 'He's out of control,'" recalls Roger St. Jean, a police officer,

now retired, who was summoned to the scene. "And then she said something really strange. 'If you have to shoot him, that's O.K.' I thought, Whoa, that's a dysfunctional family." Josef was arrested and forcibly committed to a local mental hospital, Clinton Valley Center. The center diagnosed a violent, "unspecified psychosis" and "latent schizophrenia."

After he was released, Meyers hired a bodyguard, and began claiming that he had attended Harvard. The people around him didn't know exactly what he did for a living. "He always had that air about him," Dennis Kearns, who worked as Meyers's bodyguard in the early nineteen-eighties, recalls. "He said somebody was after him, so I followed him around." Kearns quit after Meyers wrote him a bad check.

In June of 1985, Meyers met a woman named Marianne Maio at the Detroit Grand Prix auto race. They got married three years later, and opened a retail store in the Detroit area called *Such a Deal*, selling off-season designer clothes. Meyers tried to expand the store into a local chain. "He always wanted to hurry up and make tons of money," Marianne said.

He was, she added, "like a chameleon." On a trip to Boston, Meyers gave her a tour around Cambridge, and reminisced about what he described as his college years there. "Every time he

talked to you, you felt like you had a kindred spirit, someone that you could trust," she said.

In January, 1986, Meyers called the Detroit office of the Drug Enforcement Administration and told agents there that he had worked as a money launderer and enforcer for drug dealers. He wanted to switch sides and become a paid informant. The D.E.A. agreed, and Meyers helped officials arrange a cocaine deal that led to a bust the following May. But, a week later, Meyers contacted the local branch of the F.B.I. He complained that the D.E.A. wasn't paying him enough and accused his D.E.A. handler of asking for a kickback. Meyers took a polygraph on this accusation and failed, but the Bureau had such a need for informants who could work drug cases that it decided to overlook the deception—as well as Meyers's mental-health history. He was placed under the direction of a young agent named Richard Mazzari. "I thought, This guy is not going to solve the Brinks robbery for us," Walton, who was in charge of Michigan operations at the time, said. "But if he's going to provide ongoing narcotics information, and Mazzari can handle him, and H.Q. says it's O.K., let's take a shot at him."

Meyers worked for the F.B.I. for nearly a year, until the evening of March 26,



"In case of a loss of cabin pressure, oxygen masks will drop down in front of you for two dollars."



1987, when D.E.A. agents arrested him for dealing two kilograms of cocaine. When Mazzari spoke with him three days later, Meyers told him that the D.E.A. had set him up, as a way to get revenge for his accusation about the kickback. After it was revealed that Meyers was working for the F.B.I., the prosecutor withdrew the charges and said that he had done so because of a "strong issue of entrapment."

The F.B.I. decommissioned Meyers, but in December, 1990, he returned and, according to internal communications, offered to "furnish valuable information concerning illegal infiltration of legitimate businesses by LCN"—La Cosa Nostra—"and money laundering."

The F.B.I. reinstated him and gave him the code name Harvard. Meyers's Michigan F.B.I. file records that he soon provided information on a conspiracy to sell counterfeit Levi's; the Bureau called it Operation Knickers. Four months later, his tips led to a large seizure of counterfeit Ralph Lauren shirts. Before long, Meyers was also supplying information to the A.T.F. and to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Marianne said she learned of his law-enforcement connections only when the F.B.I. called to inform her of his arrest on the cocaine charges. In subsequent years, she said, Mazzari and other agents came by the Meyerses' house. Josef, Marianne said, seemed to relish

his role as a kind of auxiliary F.B.I. agent. "You know how somebody gets in trouble, and you got them in trouble?" she said. "It was, like, 'Ha-ha, I got him.'"

Meyers had told Marianne that one of his grandmothers was descended from Austrian royalty. In 1990, when he was between stints working for the F.B.I., he and Marianne legally changed their last names to von Habsburg-Lothringen. The couple had two daughters, who took the last name as well. Von Habsburg may have been inspired by Archduke Stefan von Habsburg-Lothringen, who had settled in the Detroit area decades earlier. He and his wife, Jerrine, lived in a nearby suburb and had five children, including two sons close to Josef Meyers's age. "My husband was a direct descendant of Queen Victoria and the Tsar of Russia," Jerrine von Habsburg-Lothringen said. She'd never met Josef Meyers. "He is an impostor, a total impostor."

Shortly after changing his name, von Habsburg forged a check for a hundred thousand dollars in a bogus real-estate transaction, but his F.B.I. connections again helped him avoid legal problems. Tried as Josef Meyers, he pleaded guilty in 1991. The state's sentencing guidelines called for him to serve between eighteen and sixty months in prison.

Von Habsburg's lawyer told the judge that the plea deal should take into account "his status, which I would not like to go into on the record."

"Well," the judge said, "it's a situation with the F.B.I. Right? Right?"

"Judge, may we approach for a moment?"

The judge adjourned after a short off-the-record conference, and von Habsburg walked out with two years' probation and no prison time. Someone labelled his file, incorrectly, "not guilty by jury." His work with the F.B.I. was proving to be extremely valuable.

Von Habsburg was facing other legal troubles, though. His Such a Deal stores were failing, and creditors were suing him under his various aliases. A man from Long Island showed up at the von Habsburgs' door, angry about money he'd lost to Josef over the Internet.

Around this time, von Habsburg

began making mysterious trips to New York and Europe, telling Marianne he was pursuing work in the financial industry. He persuaded his father-in-law, a former Chrysler worker, to sign over his retirement stock, which he promised to invest. On September 5, 1993, the day his third child, a son, was born, von Habsburg left his family and moved to New York City. At the child's baptism, F.B.I. agent Mazzari stood in as the child's sponsor (Mazzari, who did not respond to requests for an interview, later told an F.B.I. investigator working on the Santoro case that von Habsburg had asked him to attend because he had "no friends to act as witnesses.") Marianne said that she never spoke to Josef again. Her father never got his money back.

Von Habsburg rented an apartment in Tribeca, decorated it with paintings by prominent Eastern European artists, and began to live like an Austrian royal. He started to pursue investment schemes built around his royal identity.

Renne Gjoni, an American actor who sometimes works in Croatia, met von Habsburg in the fall of 1993, at a popular spot called the Buddha Bar. "The bouncer said, 'Renne, you have to meet this guy, he's a prince from the von Habsburg family,'" Gjoni said. Gjoni found von Habsburg alone at a reserved table and they began to converse in Croatian, which von Habsburg had learned from his mother, in Michigan. "I asked him how he came to speak Croatian," Gjoni said, "and he said he'd lived outside Zagreb, where his family had a palace. As part of the Habsburg Empire, he had to live in every place the empire had extended."

The two men became close, and they'd visit the Metropolitan Museum, where von Habsburg would point out the pieces donated by "the Habsburg family." "He would take me out to expensive French restaurants in SoHo, to expensive night clubs," Gjoni said. Gjoni was attending N.Y.U., and von Habsburg persuaded him to switch to Harvard, his adopted alma mater.

After spending years living as a royal bachelor in New York, von Habsburg met Michelle Trico, a tall, striking-looking woman, at a night club. On

their first date, he told friends, he treated her to dinner on a friend's yacht, with bottles of wine labelled with their names. They eventually moved into an eight-thousand-dollar-a-month apartment in SoHo, where they kept a photo album of von Habsburg relatives in the living room, and a picture of one of the family's European castles on the refrigerator. They invited friends out to dinner at expensive restaurants like Per Se and Masa, and hosted catered parties. Gjoni recalls wandering into the von Habsburgs' bedroom and finding an open bag filled with stacks of hundred-dollar bills. The couple had three children—two of whom with names that von Habsburg had given to his children with Marianne.

To friends and acquaintances, von Habsburg presented himself variously as an expert in foreign-currency markets, an investment banker, a stockbroker, a former retail baron, the head of an arbitrage firm, a private-equity manager, and a real-estate developer. At times, he claimed to have retired from Wall Street to run "the family office," managing a billion-dollar fortune. But public records indicate that he never registered as a broker, held a license, or passed a financial-industry exam in the United States.

He approached investors about a variety of corporate takeovers, real-estate transactions, and private-equity placements. A business associate of von Habsburg's speculated that some of his deals may have required an up-front retainer, which von Habsburg would keep if the deal fell apart. Von Habsburg once approached a hedge-fund manager saying that he was looking to invest a hundred million dollars in cash and that he could deliver other rich European clients. Von Habsburg took the manager and his colleagues out for a thousand-dollar dinner, the hedge-fund manager said, "but I never saw a dime of this money." After Bernard Madoff was arrested, in December, 2008, von Habsburg called. "He said, 'This is unbelievable! I can't believe he pulled this off.'"

In conversation, von Habsburg

would casually refer to his powerful connections, including Liliane Bettencourt, the French billionaire and heiress to the L'Oréal empire, and an Iranian prince who was a nephew of the former Shah. Occasionally, his claims proved true. Gjoni was invited to spend one Thanksgiving with von Habsburg at the town house of Barbara (Bobo) Rockefeller, the ex-wife of the Standard Oil scion Winthrop Rockefeller. Gjoni noticed framed photographs of the von Habsburg children scattered around her house.

Von Habsburg often mentioned his close relationship with Eugene Sullivan, a former federal judge. Sullivan is a law partner of Louis Freeh, the former head of the F.B.I. "He always talked about him and Freeh," one acquaintance who had lunch with von Habsburg and Sullivan said, noting that the two were friendly. (Freeh issued a statement, through a spokesperson, saying that he "never met, knew, or had any business dealings with" von Habsburg. Sullivan refused repeated requests to discuss von Habsburg. "I don't want to hear what your story is about," he said.)

Even von Habsburg's oddities seemed the indulgences of a royal. "I deal with a lot of people who are very wealthy and very weird," the hedge-fund manager said. "He had this façade, and he made it seem like it was real." Some of his SoHo neighbors told me that he dressed himself and his three children in lederhosen and hung a fishing line with a twenty-dollar bill on the hook from his second-story window, which he would yank away when passersby reached for it. He called it "people fishing."

At some point between his arrival in New York and 2001, von Habsburg's Detroit law-enforcement handlers had passed him on to the F.B.I. in Manhattan. Von Habsburg said that he wanted to fight white-collar crime and that his new identity was to shield him from dangerous people in Detroit. The F.B.I. knew von Habsburg's history and his real name, but officials saw his flamboyant persona as an advantage. "He was a character," recalls a former F.B.I. agent



who served as one of von Habsburg's handlers for two years in New York. "So he wasn't anybody that someone would think was law enforcement." The agents gave him a new code name: Bobo Rock.

By the late summer of 2002, Michael Grimm had become Michael Garibaldi and established the office in the World Financial Center. That September, von Habsburg suggested to his handler that the Bureau go after Albert Santoro. Several weeks later, von Habsburg made the handoff to Grimm.

Von Habsburg supplied other Wooden Nickel targets, including the C.E.O. of a small company who, in June of 2003, came to New York to try to raise capital. The C.E.O. attended half a dozen investment meetings set up by a banker, one of which included Garibaldi and von Habsburg. Garibaldi did all the talking, the C.E.O. recalls, while von Habsburg wandered around the room and stared out the window. Late that evening, over drinks, von Habsburg proposed making his own investment in the company. He said, "I have all this money offshore that I can't get into the country," the C.E.O. told me. Von Habsburg said he could deliver the money in hundred-thousand-dollar cash lots, but he didn't want the deal registered with the Security and Exchange Commission. "I said, 'If you want to buy stock, you can pay cash in a suitcase, or check, we don't fucking care,'" the C.E.O. said. "But we report it to the S.E.C.'" The C.E.O. told me, "I thought he was just a small-time crook."

A few weeks later, F.B.I. agents arrested the C.E.O. and accused him of conspiracy to engage in securities fraud. The charges proved baseless and were soon dropped, but the C.E.O.'s name appeared in a list of Operation Wooden Nickel suspects, and then on the nightly news. He was forced to resign. "It was the destruction of a person's life, for no reason, based on nothing," he said. "The system is very scary. This Josef guy seems like he was almost on a fee basis: I'll go find a crime and you give me a fee. Anybody could do that. If you had the F.B.I.'s money in a briefcase, you could get anybody to do anything." The C.E.O. spoke anonymously, because he feared that the F.B.I. might target him

again. "Our fine government ruined my life," he said.

Von Habsburg was often paid in "expenses," according to portions of his F.B.I. file. A typical report during the C.E.O.'s case details fifteen hundred dollars for rent, five hundred for child care, three hundred for a cell phone, two hundred and fifty for utilities, and seven hundred in "miscellaneous" expenses for a month's work. The agency also covered von Habsburg's entertaining in night clubs as part of Operation Wooden Nickel.

The F.B.I. won't respond to specific questions about von Habsburg, but James Margolin, a spokesman for the F.B.I.'s New York office, downplayed his involvement with the Bureau. "As a matter of public record, he was going to be a cooperating witness, on a witness list, for one or more trials," he told me. Beyond that, "we don't comment on someone's information, or work as a cooperating witness." Margolin added that the relationship, which, according to documents and interviews, stretched across at least a few years, lasted only "eleven months, I think."

One former U.S. prosecutor on the Santoro case acknowledged that von Habsburg's motives seemed typical of informants. "There are quite a few people who like having contact with the F.B.I.," the attorney said. "It makes them feel important to turn people in. They like living in this mysterious world. I would put him in that category. And maybe he felt that if he did things wrong they would protect him."

Grimm said that he worked only sparingly with von Habsburg during Wooden Nickel. "He seemed very animated," Grimm told me recently. "He dressed boisterously, if you will. He was a bit odd. I think he had an accent." Grimm said that he doesn't recall the C.E.O.'s case, and that he was careful to maintain his distance from von Habsburg. "I remember trying to vet out who he was," Grimm said. "I remember that I didn't feel like I had enough on this guy to work that closely."

As Steven Rambam, the private investigator, looked into von Habsburg for the Santoro trial in late 2005 and early 2006, he interviewed von Habsburg's mother and brother, his estranged father,

and dozens of other acquaintances and past fraud victims. The prosecution eventually turned over documents about von Habsburg, including parts of his F.B.I. informant file, his rap sheet, and a letter noting that, in addition to his arrests, he'd committed assault and extortion, sold counterfeit goods, and collected drug debts.

Santoro's lawyers prepared to use what Rambam had gathered to claim that von Habsburg had entrapped their client on behalf of the F.B.I. According to the defense, an unsupervised informant had goaded an innocent lawyer, desperate and prone to making empty boasts, into the eager arms of Michael Grimm. One audiotaped conversation between Grimm and Tommy—an F.B.I. confidential informant who supposedly dealt steroids and whose money was given to Santoro—recorded the F.B.I. agent saying that he'd "caught" Santoro contradicting himself and making things up about his past.

The U.S. Attorney's office planned to argue in response that no one had enticed Santoro into breaking the law. He had claimed that he knew how to launder money, and Grimm had merely given him the opportunity to do so. Grimm told me that the tapes put Santoro's guilt beyond doubt. "He explained how he did his money laundering," Grimm said.

Still, the prosecution team and the F.B.I. seemed determined to keep von Habsburg as far away from the case as they could. When Litman, Santoro's lawyer, announced that he planned to subpoena von Habsburg to testify, the prosecutors argued that they couldn't find him. When Rambam, accompanied by a defense lawyer, rang the bell of von Habsburg's SoHo apartment to serve papers, the U.S. Attorney's office sent a letter accusing him of harassment. Rambam created a Web page seeking information on von Habsburg, but the F.B.I. contacted his Web-hosting company, he said, and had the page taken down. The defense discovered court documents showing that Josef von Habsburg had jumped probation in Florida—resulting in an arrest warrant that remained open for nearly twenty-two years—but, after the U.S. Attorney's office coordinated with a Florida lawyer recently hired by von Habsburg,

a judge voided the probation and withdrew the warrant.

In July, 2006, Rambam was preparing to give a talk about privacy and investigative techniques at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City when four uniformed F.B.I. agents approached him. He was handcuffed and taken to Brooklyn's detention center and charged with obstruction of justice. A federal complaint accused Rambam of witness intimidation and falsely identifying himself as working for the F.B.I. during interviews with the parents of von Habsburg's partner Michelle. A Washington Post headline read, "AGENTS ARREST BACKGROUND SPECIALIST AT HACKERS FORUM." After forty-eight hours in jail, Rambam, who denied the charges, was released without having to post bail.

"The government has acted in a very unusual manner," Judge Thomas Griesa told the lawyers in open court in late July. "I've never heard of this before. You've arrested the defendant's investigator." Not long afterward, as the deadline to indict Rambam neared, the U.S. Attorney's office dropped the charges against him in New York; then the U.S. Attorney's office in California refilled the charges. Two months after that, those charges were dropped as well.

By mid-2006, Michael Grimm had left the F.B.I. But he was still a key witness in Santoro's trial, and the defense team began looking into his background, too. They were particularly interested in following up on a tip that another lawyer had given to Litman. Several years earlier, the lawyer said, Grimm had been involved in an altercation at a popular West Indian-themed night club in Queens called Caribbean Tropics, during which he was accused of misusing his F.B.I. authority. Litman sent Steven Rambam to look into the matter.

Just as Rambam began gathering facts on the incident, however, prosecutors ratcheted up the pressure on Santoro to settle. For months, F.B.I. agents had been tailing him while he was out on bail and contacting his clients. Santoro said that one prosecutor threatened to bring his ailing parents

into the case. dictments result in a guilty plea, and so, in the end, did Santoro's. He pleaded to "operating an unlicensed money-transmitting business." "The amount of time that he was facing if he went to trial and lost was monumental compared with what he ended up pleading guilty to," Todd Terry, Litman's co-counsel, said. (Litman died last year.) "Even if we did win this case, they were taking it very personally, given that they'd arrested Steven on obviously bogus charges. There was a risk they would keep coming after him and tear his life apart forever." The judge sentenced Santoro to eighteen months in federal prison.

Santoro's conviction was one of fifty-six associated with Michael Grimm's undercover work in Operation Wooden Nickel, which brought in more than a hundred million dollars in fines.

The scrutiny that accompanied von Habsburg's role in Wooden Nickel seemed to unhinge him. By the end of the case, his friends said, he was besieged by paranoia, and had wired

his apartment with a bank of cameras. One morning in January, 2009, the von Habsburgs got into a drunken argument that prompted Michelle to call 911. Von Habsburg shouted at the police that he had connections to the F.B.I. and to Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The couple were arrested for child endangerment, but they soon entered counselling and the case was sealed. In March, 2009, the Oakland County, Michigan, prosecutor's office, after years of Marianne's petitioning to obtain child support from von Habsburg, issued a warrant for his arrest. That summer, the von Habsburgs were evicted from the SoHo apartment, owing thirty-five thousand dollars. They left no forwarding address. In early 2010, a Detroit *News* article broke the story that von Habsburg, a.k.a. Josef Meyers, was both an F.B.I. informant and among Michigan's biggest deadbeat dads. After receiving no response from the F.B.I., the Oakland County sheriff's office approached the U.S. Marshals to help bring him in.

Shortly afterward, I met Rambam in



"I have two mommies. I know where the apostrophe goes."



"Ryan's a late adopter."

a restaurant across from von Habsburg's old apartment. He was working pro bono on behalf of law-enforcement authorities in Michigan to find von Habsburg. He had promised Marianne that he would help her get child-support money from her estranged husband—and he also wanted to get back at the F.B.I. for, he believed, trying to intimidate him during the Santoro case.

"My first stop is always the last known address," Rambam told me. He went across the street and rang the doorbell, where the current tenant reported that U.S. Marshals had already visited. Rambam then began crisscrossing SoHo, showing von Habsburg's photograph to clerks and waiters. Eventually, he stopped by a local eyeglass store. The manager recognized von Habsburg and said that he came in often to have his glasses repaired.

Within a week, U.S. Marshals, acting on information gathered by Rambam, had found von Habsburg hiding in a closet in a one-bedroom apartment in Battery Park City, and he was extradited to Detroit. When I reached him by phone in custody, he at first seemed eager to discuss what he called his "agency relationships." But, in a video chat at the jail the following day,

he instead asked me to submit questions in writing. When I did, he never replied.

Rambam believed that von Habsburg would still somehow avoid prison. He enumerated all the instances in which von Habsburg had been aided by his association with the F.B.I.: from the time he dodged prosecution for cocaine dealing to the slap on the wrist he got for forging a hundred-thousand-dollar check to the withdrawn warrant in Florida.

While awaiting sentencing for failing to pay child support, von Habsburg requested that the probation officer writing his pre-sentence investigation report contact Judge Sullivan. There is no evidence that the officer ever made the call, and neither Sullivan nor anyone from the F.B.I. showed up for von Habsburg's mid-August sentencing. But both P.I.s did, along with Marianne and the three children from von Habsburg's first family. A sheriff's deputy brought von Habsburg into the courtroom in hand- and leg-cuffs and the standard-issue navy jumpsuit. He looked paler and thinner than when I'd first seen him, at his extradition hearing in New York. His two Michigan daughters, aged twenty-one and nineteen, testified. "You are nothing to me," the nineteen-year-old said, turning to him from

across the courtroom. "You are a filthy excuse for a father."

The judge declared von Habsburg to be "not a good candidate for probation" and sentenced him to three and a half years in prison. "Good luck to the family," she said.

Michael Grimm found himself on a more auspicious path. He is now featured regularly on cable news, and he was recently chosen to chair the House Republican Policy Committee's Task Force on Foreign Policy. When I spoke to Grimm's former F.B.I. colleagues, some applauded his undercover work, which also included public-corruption investigations in New Jersey and Florida. "I wouldn't question his integrity," Lawrence Ferazani, an agent who worked closely with him, said. "And he never, ever challenged the rules." Others were taken aback that he had used his career as an agent to help him gain higher office. "He was not thought of very highly," one former agent told me. Another agent called Grimm "a very good undercover" with "a big ego." "He was an F.B.I. agent whom I would classify as a maverick," he said. "Mavericks bring you big cases, and they can bring you big trouble."

During Grimm's congressional campaign, an F.B.I. spokesperson publicly chastised him for using Bureau imagery in his political ads. Recently, James Margolin said that Grimm's contention to Van Susteren—which he repeated to me—that he was the first successful undercover agent on Wall Street was false. "Maybe he just doesn't know the history," Margolin said.

Not long ago, I finally found information about the night-club altercation that Santoro's lawyers had been looking for when he pleaded guilty. It involved a lawsuit filed in the summer of 2000 against Grimm by a Guyanese-American former N.Y.P.D. officer named Gordon Williams. This winter, I spoke with Williams about the incident. "It was one of those days that I will never forget," he said. "You lose a loved one and you remember the day. It was like that." When I spoke with Grimm later, however, he declared that Williams's account is a fabrication, that he had acted with professional probity, and that he had been cleared of any wrongdoing.

On July 10, 1999, Williams said, he was working off duty at Caribbean

Tropics. Shortly after midnight, Michael Grimm walked in with a woman of Caribbean descent. The woman's estranged husband, who is also of Caribbean descent, was at the club and confronted Grimm. The two men began to argue. Williams escorted Grimm away. Williams recalled, "He said to me, 'Thanks a lot man, he don't know who he's fucking with.' Then he said something frightening. 'I'll fuckin' make him disappear where nobody will find him.'" (Grimm calls this allegation "insane.") After that, Williams said, Grimm and the woman left, as did the husband.

Around 2:30 A.M., there was a commotion on the dance floor. According to Williams, somebody was shouting, "He's got a gun!" Following a crowd into the club's garage, Williams discovered that Grimm and the husband had returned, and Grimm was holding a weapon. Grimm was "carrying on like a madman," Williams said. "He's screaming, 'I'm gonna fuckin' kill him.' So I said to him, 'Who are you?' He put the gun back in his waist and said, 'I'm a fucking F.B.I. agent, ain't nobody gonna threaten me.'" (Grimm said he only moved his gun from an ankle holster to his waistband.) The bouncer at the front door told Williams that, when he patted Grimm down and found his gun, Grimm had showed his F.B.I. identification. The bouncer then let him pass through the club's metal detector.

Grimm left the club, but at 4 A.M., just before the club closed, he returned again, according to Williams, this time with another F.B.I. agent and a group of N.Y.P.D. officers. Grimm had told the police that he had been assaulted by the estranged husband and his friends. Williams said that Grimm took command of the scene, and refused to let the remaining patrons and employees leave. "Everybody get up against the fucking wall," Williams recalled him saying. "The F.B.I. is in control." Then Grimm, who apparently wanted to find the man with whom he'd had the original altercation, said something that Williams said he'll never forget: "All the white people get out of here."

Nirmilla Jitta, a retired N.Y.P.D. officer who was at Caribbean Tropics that night, confirmed that Grimm "left and then he came back." Grimm, she said, "forced everyone to stay in the club,

saying that he was an F.B.I. agent. He was using his authority when he shouldn't have been." An employee of the club who was working that night remembers Grimm telling the white people to leave. Grimm "was really aggressive and really violent. You know, you put on a badge and you really think you are above everybody else," the employee, who is white and who was allowed to depart, said.

No one was arrested, but later that morning Williams was informed that he was being investigated for "interfering with an F.B.I. investigation." Grimm had told the N.Y.P.D. that Williams refused to help him. After Williams provided his account, the D.A.'s office declined to press charges. But Williams was suspended for moonlighting without department approval. Grimm "should have been arrested," Williams told me. "People that night were petrified." He'd filed the lawsuit against Grimm for slander because, "when the N.Y.P.D. and the F.B.I. have a fight, the N.Y.P.D. loses." The U.S. Attorney's office successfully filed a motion to shift the case to federal court, claiming that Grimm had been "acting within the scope of his employment." It then moved to dismiss the suit. Williams chose not to reply, and the suit was dismissed. In 2003, he retired from the N.Y.P.D.

Recently, in his Washington office, Grimm told me that he'd been jumped by his date's husband and four other men that night. He said that he approached Williams, who had refused to call 911. Grimm said that he then went outside, found a patrol car, and reentered with the police. Although weapons were not permitted in the club, Grimm said that he'd been carrying his gun the whole night, and had flashed it only when pulling out his badge. As for threatening to kill people, he said, "That's not my personality. I don't need to speak that way. A guy with a gun who knows how to use it doesn't need to say anything." He denied that he had forced everyone to stay or declared an F.B.I. operation, saying that the N.Y.P.D. had been in charge. He suggested that witnesses may have confused him with the other F.B.I. agent. The police report, he said, would show that he was assaulted and acted with "incredible restraint." Later, he sent an e-mail adding that the Department of Justice Office of Professional Responsi-

bility had cleared him in an investigation. (I repeatedly asked the N.Y.P.D. about the incident, and attempted to obtain the police report under New York's freedom-of-information laws, but by mid-April the N.Y.P.D. had turned over no files about the incident; this winter, the Justice Department denied a freedom-of-information request for files concerning Grimm.) "I was a hundred per cent by the book and fully exonerated," Grimm said.

Albert Santoro served his prison sentence and was released in 2008. The following year, Judge Griesa terminated his supervised release early, so that he could return to work. Santoro moved to Miami, where he got a job as the interim C.E.O. at a helicopter-sales company, and then started his own marketing-consulting firm. He also spent hours with the Consequences Foundation, a group run by Lea Black, the wife of the prominent Miami attorney Roy Black, which steers juvenile delinquents away from jail. Lea Black told me, "He's a guy that always wants to help people. I think he has learned his lesson that way, and he is committed to keeping other people from having that experience."

I met with Santoro last year at the Pink Pony, a restaurant on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Now thirty-eight years old, with shoulder-length blond hair parted down the middle, he said he hoped eventually to reclaim his New York reputation and his law license. He seemed chastened by the experience. "I was guilty of lacking sensible judgment," he said. But he added that his chance encounter with von Habsburg and then Grimm had cost him years of his life. "This would never have happened, any of it, if I wasn't in the wrong place at the wrong time and met this scumbag Josef Meyers," he told me.

"They had this guy out there," he said. "They didn't monitor him, they created a crime that didn't exist." He had been "broke and stupid, and paid for it," he said. "But the government is not supposed to be a moral pressure point. They're not supposed to push you to see how far you will go." ♦



FICTION

DENIERS

BY SAM LIPSYTE

"Trauma this, atrocity that, people ought to keep their traps shut," Mandy's father said. American traps tended to hang open. Pure crap poured out. What he and the others had gone through shouldn't have a name, he told her friend Tovah, all those years later in the nursing home. People gave names to things so they could tell stories about them, goddam fairy tales about children who got out alive.

Mandy's father, Jacob, had never said anything like this to Mandy, not in any of his tongues. He'd said other things, or nothing at all. He had worked for thirty-nine years as a printer in Manhattan. The founders of the company had invented the Yellow Pages.

"Think about that," he'd often said.

Mandy did think about it, the thick directory that used to boost her up on her stool at the kitchen counter.

She'd spent her childhood mornings at that counter, culling raisins from her cereal, surveying the remains of her father's dawn meal, his toast crusts, the sugared dregs in his coffee mug. Sometimes she'd wondered if he would come home from work that day, but it was a game, because he always came home. He'd eat his dinner and take to his reclining—or, really, collapsing—chair, listen to his belly gurgle, read popular histories of the American West. Maybe he'd watch a rerun of "Hogan's Heroes," the only show he could abide.

His gastric arias mostly stood in for conversation, but some evenings he managed a

few words, such as the night he spotted Mandy's library book on the credenza. This teen novel told the story of a suburban boy who befriends an elderly neighbor, a wanted Nazi. Mandy watched her father study the book from across the room. The way he handled it made her think he was scornful of its binding or paper stock, but then he read the dust flap, shuddered. He whispered in his original language, the one he rarely used, so glottal, abyssal.

"Daddy," she called from the sofa, her leotard still damp from dance. She liked the way the purple fabric encased her, the sporty stink.

"Daddy," she said.

He spat out a word that sounded like "shame," but more shameful.



That night, her mother, who'd grown up in the next town over, who'd dreamed of exotic travel only to live the inverted version—the older European man, handsomely gaunt, haunted, roaring up on his motorcycle at a county fair—commanded Mandy to explore new reading topics. The great explorers, perhaps. The not-so-great explorers.

"He never talks about it," Mandy said.

"There might be no words, honey."

"Does he talk to you?"

"We communicate," her mother said.

"Was he like this when you met him?"

"Yes. But it was different. He wanted to kiss me all the time."

Mandy decided she wouldn't read anything else about the era of her father's agony. If she wasn't good enough to hear his story, so be it. Other, more generous catastrophes would arrive.

Like, for instance, the spring day a dashing fellow in a pink blazer knocked on their door. The man worked for Shell Oil, which wanted to build a new gas station down the block. Mandy, soon

to turn eleven and pained by any news unrelated to her birthday party, had heard murmurings. The plans called for a monstrous sign, the glowing sort more suitable for the highway, and the neighborhood had geared up for a fight. The working stiff and the old Dutch families had joined with the lawyers and doctors to battle a common nemesis whose garish sign would savage property values.

Lawrence, with his sailing tan and smart, maybe more off-salmon blazer, had been sent to talk to the townspeople—with honesty and understanding, he told Mandy's mother—about their misguided fears and the benefits of both the gas station and the sign, which, incidentally, would spin with incandescent beauty against the north-Jersey night.

Alone, Mandy's mother let him in, and within an hour agreed to assist him in his campaign. Within a week they were tearing off each other's polyfibres at Arlen's Adult Motel near the George Washington Bridge. Mandy heard the details years later from her Aunt Linda, who added odd touches, such as Mandy's growing a

tiny potbelly from too much junk food, since the assignments left her mother no time to cook. Mandy didn't remember that. She'd once seen Lawrence hunched over some papers in their kitchen—he threw her a funny, rueful look—but she did not recall a season of Whoppers and strawberry shakes. Still, for all she knew, her torments with the mirrors and malnourished beauties of fashion magazines and even her esophageal tract, all of which she had come to call, after years of therapy and therapeutic coffee dates, her "body shit," might as well have been spawned from the slime of some long-buried, comsyrupe confusion.

The Shell-sign resistance movement grew strong and raucous. When word leaked of Mandy's mother's collaborationist stance, somebody egged their stucco garage. Though Lawrence's door-to-door sorties against tree-hugger pieties seemed lonely and courageous to Mandy's mother, what took place was a legal contest between a tiny township and a transnational corporation. After bitter and pointless debate, the council zoned the lot

for the gas station and the galaxy above the lot for the sign.

Mandy's mother chilled champagne in the motel ice bucket, but Lawrence never arrived for the victory toast. Not even Linda knew if Mandy's mother drank the bubbly or poured it over the terrace, but everybody remembered how she sobbed herself home and took to her bed.

She clutched the motel's "Do Not Disturb" card for days.

Even Jacob seemed touched by his wife's distress. Who could refute the awfulness of what this bastard had done to the woman who once, long ago, and after the Germans had murdered his mother and sister, had come reasonably close to being the only woman he could ever love? He tended to his wife with the wary compassion of a plague nurse.

One night, Mandy woke near dawn to see her father yanking open her bureau drawers. He stuffed a duffelbag with her tank tops and jeans. She could count the times he had crossed the threshold of her room, but now he lifted her in his arms as he once had their sick spaniel and slid her into his sedan. She fell asleep again, cozy against the cool vinyl, and woke once more in Linda's Upper West Side apartment. Linda put a teacup to Mandy's lips. Her mother, they told her, was dead. Running motor. Sealed garage. Sweet suburban sleep. She'd left a note, Mandy found out, years later, on a Shell petition in the kitchen. "Oh, shit," it read. Beneath her scrawl, boldfaced words exhorted "Give American Business a Chance!"

So. Her father was a Survivor. Her Smother had not survived. And Mandy? Nineteen years later, Mandy semi-survived, had three months clean, some fluorescent key-ring tags to prove it. Her ex-boyfriend Greg had tags, too, wore them snaked together off his belt. Mandy saw him at meetings, but she worried that he wasn't letting the program work on him, was maybe just white-knuckling it, a funny thing to say about a black man. Greg had almost finished college before the pipe got him. He possessed such a wry and gentle soul, except for the times he railed at her for being an evil dwarf witch who meant to stew his heart in bat broth (he'd majored in world folklore), and she'd always adored those horn-rimmed glasses that made him look like the professor he could still become if

IN VALLEYS

And the lovely Garonne, which passes through drowsy villages each night like a priest with the last sacrament. Dark clouds grow in the sky.

The Visigoths live on, in certain faces.

In summer the empire of insects spreads.

You consider how not to be yourself:

is it only on journeys, in valleys, which open others' wounds?

In a bookshop the salesclerk calls the author of "To the Lighthouse" Virginia. As if she might

turn up at any minute, on a bicycle, with her long, sad face.

But Paul Valéry (of the Academy) thought

history didn't exist. Perhaps he was right.

Perhaps we've been taken in. When he was dying, General de Gaulle tried to find him penicillin. Too late.

—Adam Zagajewski

(Translated, from the Polish, by Clare Cavanagh.)

he let go of his rage. But if he had a discipline at the moment, an area of scholarly expertise, it was deep knowledge of how to steal or to lick diseased penises for the teensiest rocks. It wasn't as if Mandy had been any better months back. But now she was, and Greg, who often shared about what he called his terror runs, appeared to be planning one, the way some people contemplate a Berkshires getaway.

Otherwise, things were on the uptick. Linda, in such pain these last few years, had gone to a better place. If an afterlife existed, Mandy figured that for Linda it would be more of the same—cappuccinos, Chinese, films at Lincoln Center. You could do that stuff dead. Now the studio apartment on a barren stretch of Upper Broadway would be Mandy's. She deserved it—she had lived there as Linda's caretaker, never missed a medication or a chemo trip, always laundered the sheets, no matter how high she was off Linda's morphine.

Jacob spent his days in stoic near-paralysis in a nursing home close to their old house, since sold to a happy (though you never knew) Sri Lankan family. Clean and sober, Mandy would be able to visit him regularly now. Also, Bill Clinton had been reelected, now, which was what Mandy

had wanted, and, perhaps most exciting, people were really responding to cardio ballet, the class she taught at the Jewish Community Center.

Maybe once she'd dreamed of jazz-dance stardom, roses heaped on her Capozios, but keeping it real and teaching cardio ballet constituted triumphs enough. True, her sponsor, Adelaide, was in fact a star, a regular on the afternoon soaps, but that was just normal Manhattan recovery weirdness.

The main thing for Mandy was to focus on her goals and keep her eyes peeled for Greg. She could imagine the ease of a slip, a search for that early bliss when all they did was snuggle and drink brandy and smoke crack and have their epic conversations about—about what, the vicissitudes? Was that the word Greg favored? Then they'd fuck and grapple until dawn, when the cooing of pigeons tilted them into jittery sleep.

But of course it went bad. You had to play the whole tape, Adelaide told Mandy from her makeup chair. Mandy's disease was just waiting for her to pick up again. Her disease was tougher than ever, did pushups, Pilates. (The girl with the foundation paint nodded.)

"Remember those last, ugly moments,"

Adelaide said. "That's the part of the tape you've got to watch, Mand."

So she remembered how their pigeon sleep scooped something out of them, shattered their circadian clocks, which Mandy thought might also be their moral compasses. They fought, they hit—over drugs, money, presumed betrayals. Most of the presumptions proved correct. Mandy confessed to mutual fondling with a banker from the rooms, a guy who liked to repeat the same story: how he got tired of always having to score and bought an entire half kilo for his apartment, but his cat found the package, clawed it to shreds—dead calico, toxic carpet, some unborn child's college education up in pharmaceutical-grade clouds.

"That pussy saved your life!" a retired East Coast Crip in a wheelchair shouted.

Uncle Drive-By, Greg called him.

While Mandy confessed her infidelity to Greg she caught him eying the high-end Austrian cleaver on the magnetic kitchen strip. A good terror run begins at home. But they did a brave thing. They quit crack together, for the weekend.

Then came the day she entered the apartment and through clots of rock smoke saw Greg, on his knees, his face in the crotch of an obese girl with a platinum chignon. The treasurer of Mandy's Saturday-morning Clean Slate Meditations meeting jerked off in the girl's ear. Something about seeing the Afghan that Linda had wrapped herself in during her last, ravaged days shifting under the girl's buttocks shook Mandy. Then Greg looked over, slurred-eyed, asked Mandy to join the group.

Yes, the vicissitudes.

Mandy summoned her inner banshee, threw a lamp and some decent flatware. The others fled, and Greg packed the measly possessions he'd amassed in his turd of a life—some rusted throwing stars, a box of stale marzipan, his crack pipe, his cherished coverless paperback edition of Knut Hamsun's "Hunger"—and scrambled. Now she saw him at meetings, and tried not to retch at his con-job shares, or recall the sweetness of their precious predawn hours, when addiction itself seemed as exquisite and harmless as a baby giraffe.

Today, after she'd led the ladies of cardio ballet through a true grueler, Mandy leaned on the mirrored wall of the dance studio, sipped her bottled water, thought about her father in his living rigor

morts. If they'd had them when he was younger, he might have thrived in some sort of Holocaust support group, with sponsors, chips, key tags, coffee. Just once, history could have given her father a sloppy hug.

"Keep coming back," history could have said, just as they did in the rooms.

Mandy rolled her shoulders, sank into that honeyed post-class ache. A runnel of sweat curled down her calf. The day drained out of her and endorphins filled her floodplains. Some people in recovery couldn't manufacture these chemicals anymore. But then her body tightened again. She sensed movement, a figure, a man maybe, tall, through the corridor window. The figure disappeared, and a new smaller person clopped toward her in chunky heels.

"You seem so peaceful, I hate to disturb you."

Tovah Gold looked twelve but she had a degree in creative writing and a published poetry chapbook. She'd once presented a copy to Mandy, but said she should not feel obligated to read it. Mandy sometimes wondered if Tovah thought she was dumb. The chapbook was called "For the Student Union Dead," and Mandy thought the poems in it were dumb, the way smart people were often dumb.

Tovah taught a memoir class at the J.C.C. Mostly grandmothers spilling family matzoh-ball secrets, she'd said, or retired men composing disturbingly dry accounts of affairs with their best friends' wives. "Mostly, I just help them with their segues," Tovah said.

"Hi," Mandy said now. "How's it going?"

"Slowly, painfully. No immortal lines this week, and my boyfriend, or ex-boyfriend, I should say, has decided that our poetics are incompatible."

"Right there myself," Mandy said. "I kicked Greg out. He's no good for me."

Tovah knew the Ballad of Mandy



and Greg, took anthropological delight.

"What is it you all say?" she said. "Show up until you grow up?"

"Greg won't grow up. He can go to hell."

"But don't you think he needs some—"

"Girlfriend, please," Mandy said, did that dismissive wave all the sisters did in meetings, and lately on TV, but which Mandy couldn't master.

"What's that other one?" Tovah said.

"You're only as sick as your secrets? Is that it? I love that one. It doesn't know it, but it's poetry."

"It knows it," Mandy said.

Tovah was a good friend, maybe her only one in the so-called civilian world, but that didn't mean Mandy couldn't hate her sometimes, the goody earnestness which, along with the poetess shtick, seemed both pure and calculated, a saintly condescension. Tovah's innocence was a type of abuse. But Mandy could trust her, and she understood that Tovah's fondness was genuine. That made it better and worse.

"Listen, Mandy. I need to tell you something. I don't want you to feel strange about it. Because in my world, the artist's world, it's a common thing. But maybe not for normal people."

"I'm normal?"

"You're wonderful," Tovah said.

"Thanks," Mandy said, already mourning the rousing solitude of a few minutes ago. Bitch had snatched her natural rush.

"Anyway," Tovah said, "I've been working on a poem cycle about you."

"A what?"

"A bunch of poems."

"About me?"

"Yeah."

"You don't know anything about me."

"I know a lot, Mandy."

"Not really. Maybe about me and Greg."

"Researching facts isn't the point," Tovah said. "It's about my construction of you. My projection."

"So," Mandy said. "I don't get it. Are you asking permission?"

"A real artist never asks permission."

"Oh."

"But I don't want any static between us."

"Am I Mandy?" Mandy asked.

"Pardon?"

"In your poem, am I Mandy? Do you

name me? Do you say Mandy Gottlieb?"
"No. It's addressed to a nameless person."

"Then why would I care?"

Tovah seemed stunned.

"Well... because it's so obviously you."

"But you said it's about your structure of me."

"My construction of... yes, that's right."

"So who cares?"

"I don't really understand your question."

"It's O.K., Tovah, write what your heart tells you to write."

"You are so marvellous, Mandy. You see life so clearly and simply, and it makes so much sense to you. I can't thank you enough."

"It's enough," Mandy said.

Tovah clutched her leather satchel, clapped away.

Mandy had a shower and steam, ran her favorite purple comb through her hair.

All you could do was stay clean and fit. Cardio ballet was mostly cardio. The ballet was more like a dream of yourself, like when you picture being in love. The real thing could never live up to the dream. You didn't want the real thing, even if it saved you from the heart rip of off-salmon blazers.

Outside the locker room a tall man in a hooded sweatshirt leaned against the wall. He looked about thirty, with wavy hair and blond stubble on his chin. Mandy made to move past him, and he cleared his throat, for comedic effect, she figured, though she could also hear phlegm swirl.

"Good class today?"

The man's voice was thin and kind.

"Do I know you? Have you taken cardio ballet?"

"I want to," the man said. "I want to very much."

"There's a sign-up sheet at the front desk."

"I was hoping to talk to you first. Get a read on the class."

"A read?"

"What it's all about," the man said.

"It's about cardio and ballet. Sign up. We need men."

"Would I get to be your partner?"

"Excuse me?"

"Your ballet partner. Throw you up in the air."

"Sorry. It's not very advanced ballet. This is just to get the blood pumping. There are other classes where you might... What? Why are you laughing?"

"I'm not laughing."

"You look like you're laughing."

"I know. It gets me in trouble sometimes. It's just how my face goes when I'm listening to somebody cool and beautiful talk about something she cares about."

Mandy took some delicate steps back.

"Oh, no!" The man palmed his mouth.

"I guess I just accidentally spoke my heart! I should get out of here. I'm sorry. Maybe I'll sign up for the class."

The man grinned—strong, white teeth! You didn't see many of those in meetings.

At the plastic table on the patio, overlooking a tomato field, her father picked at bird crap.

"Daddy," Mandy said. "That's poop."

Her father gave a lazy leer.

"How's your mother?"

"You know."

"Dead."

Jacob picked at the flecks.

His attendant came over, young, with cornrows, patted her father's arm. His printer's arm, shrunken.

"Having a good visit, Mr. Gottlieb?" she said.

"Swell." It sounded like "svelte." He'd purged most of his accent nearly half a century ago, but now it had returned.

"I'm Mandy."

"Oh, I know," the attendant said. "I know all about you. He says wonderful things about his Mandy. I take care of him."

"Does he ever talk about his childhood?"

"All the time. Sounds so special, upstate, fishing and all that good stuff."

Mandy's mother had said something about a summer camp for war orphans in the Adirondacks. Jacob had been older than the other children, some kind of counsellor.

Mandy noticed a glint in her father's eye now, something annihilating, bitter. Mandy couldn't understand its source. The Nazi death machine? Shell Oil? The fact that only Mandy would remember him? Did he think maybe he'd been wrong to oppose the never-forgetters, the never-againers, the never-shut-uppers? Because nobody remembered anything.

They'd even forgotten fat Schultz and the wiley Hogan, who'd died a sex freak in sleazy California. He's not even that old, Mandy thought. Seventy, seventy-one. But he'd always been old.

"Does he talk about the war? The camps? He never talked about it when I was a kid."

"What camps?"

"The one where soldiers bend you over and give you bread," her father said. "The one where you tell the guards where other men hide a rotten apple and the soldiers shoot those men."

"Maybe you should rest," Mandy said.

"But I have to get to the shop. Mr. Dwyer is expecting me."

"Better if you rest."

"Mandy, Mr. Dwyer's grandfather invented the Yellow Pages. What do you think of that? Ever have an idea like that? Your mother never visits. She still with the goy?"

"I want to thank you," Mandy said to the attendant. "For being here for him."

"It's my job."

"It's a noble job. I'd like to give you a little extra."

"Something extra would be appreciated."

"Mandy," Jacob said. "Darling. How's the whoring? You make enough money for the drugs? You let the schwarzers stick it in you?"

"Only one," Mandy said. "My fiancé, Greg."

She looked up to the attendant for some flicker of solidarity, but got nothing.

Mandy dug in her bag, plucked some bills out, and handed them over. The attendant tucked them in her pocket, but not before noticing, just at the moment Mandy did, that it amounted to only four or five dollars.

"Thanks," the attendant said.

"Goodbye, Daddy."

The tall man was not in cardio ballet the next week, and Mandy did not think of him. She kept to her steps and turns, the ones whose flawless demonstration maybe merely pained the owners of the panting faces before her. Though she had known some of the class for years, they all seemed a blur now, a moist, jiggling blob. Even as she glided into what she called her Funky Pirouette, she thought: I need a fucking meeting. She'd been avoiding meetings to avoid Greg. But now she decided to skip her post-class

musings-on-the-mats routine, head straight for the Serenity Posse II meeting on Amsterdam.

She shoed all that spandex and sadness out of the studio, switched off the lights, stepped into the corridor.

The tall man stood by the water fountain.

"I just came by to apologize for being a yammering idiot last week."

"No problem," Mandy said. "But I really have to go."

"Oh, O.K., sure. My name is Cal, by the way."

"Mandy. I thought maybe you'd signed up for class."

"I'm afraid I'm not Jewish."

"You don't have to be Jewish to take an aerobics class."

"Are you sure?"

Mandy thought about it.

"I think anybody can join the J.C.C."

"Really?" the man said.

"Why not?" Mandy said. "But what do I know?"

"I guess it would be weird if you weren't Jewish, though," the man said.

He wore a scent, smelled like high-school boy.

"Well, then," Mandy said. "I guess we better sneak you out of here."

"I thought you were going somewhere."

"I am."

It was just a nice neighborhood bistro and it was just a glass of Chardonnay. She wasn't groping under a baseboard heater for a phantom rock. She wasn't sucking on a glass stem. Instead, she sipped from a stemmed glass. A slip, sure, her life was an endless slip, but this was civilized. Fuck crack. Fuck everything but Chardonnay and Cal's teeth, his azure—which meant blue but more intense—eyes.

Cal lifted his beer.

"*Mazel tov*," he said.

"You mean *l'chaim*."

"No, *mazel tov* to you for sneaking me out of there."

"Cheers," Mandy said.

"Are you Jewish on both sides?" Cal asked.

For a moment, she thought he meant both sides of her body.

"Yes," she said.

"When did they come here?"

"Who?"

"Your people."

"I don't know. I think my mother's grandfather came from Holland or something. My father grew up in Europe. He came here and rode his motorcycle to the county fair. That's where my parents met. What about you?"

"Did your father come after the war? Did he... was he part of the Holocaust? I mean, not in a bad way, I mean..."

"Yes, he was."

"Unbelievable."

"What?"

"No, just, it's so amazing he survived."

"It is."

"Because, I should get this out there, I'm absolutely convinced all of that stuff really happened."

"I'm glad to hear it," Mandy said. This Cal was an odd bird. "What's your background?"

"I'm pure American."

"So am I."

"No, of course you are," Cal said, studied the label on his beer. Soon, Mandy knew, he would peel it.

"So, you're, like, a Jewish American?"

"Hey," Mandy said. "What's going on?"

"I just like to get to know people."

"I see. O.K. Where are you from?"

"Oregon, originally."

"What brought you to New York?"

"A job. Computer stuff. I wanted to relocate. Change my life."

"I hear you."

"You don't like your life?"

"I take it one day at a time."

"Sounds reasonable," Cal said. The sopped beer label curled around his thumb. "You want to see a movie?"

"It's pretty late."

"Nah, it's early."

"I think the showtimes are over. I go to the movies a lot."

"We could go to my place," Cal said. "I have movies. I have a bottle of wine there. You like Pinot Blanc?"

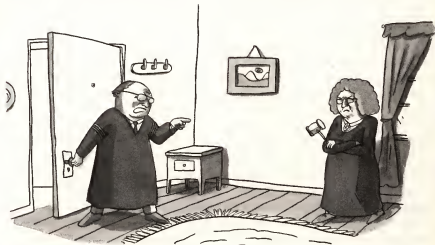
"I don't know."

"Find out."

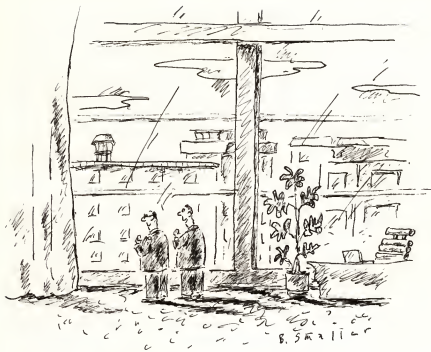
"Next time," Mandy said. "I do have to go somewhere now."

Mandy ducked into the church basement, found a seat. There was something seriously off about Cal. She could picture him as a king in the Middle Ages: Cal the Seriously Off. What a waste of a slip. She didn't want to be here at the meeting, either, but some inner instrument had guided her. She would never call it a higher power. Nor would she ever share with booze in her system. You had to honor the honor code.

Adelaide waved, pointed to a free seat beside her, but Mandy shook her off. They all sat in the dark, dilapidated theatre built by the church during more enlightened years, when some priest had thought a sanitized production of "Hair" could lead bohemian strays to Christ. Some nights it felt as though the meeting were in fact an Off Off Broadway show, feverish, vital, undisciplined. Now the addict audience nodded along with the speaker, and when he'd finished they took turns from the seats with their woes. Newcomers bemoaned their cravings for powders, begged for release. Old-timers droned on about their sex addictions,



"Yeab? Well, I sentence you to death!"



"Maybe what's good for Wall Street isn't good for Main Street, but it's great for Tribeca."

their divorces, how fat they'd gotten on red velvet cake.

A familiar voice boomed from the back rows.

"I'm Greg and I've got five weeks clean!"

"Hello, Greg!"

"And I plan to make it this time, God willing, one day at a time, but I can't feel safe right now, in the only place I can ever feel safe, here with my Serenity Posse Two posse. Why don't I feel safe? Let me tell you a little story. Really, it's more like a fable or a folktale. Once, long ago, this farmer worked his fingers to the bone so his son could learn to be a clerk at the castle. Every day, the farmer's son walked many dangerous miles to the castle for his classes, but one morning a beautiful girl stepped out onto the path holding a magic potion. 'Drink this,' the girl said, 'and you will feel so fucking good.' Now, the farmer's son, truth be told, had dabbled in this kind of potion before, but he knew it was wrong and had sworn off it. This girl, though, she was so kind and beautiful, he figured, what the hell? Well, I don't have to tell you the rest, do I? Except to say that the beautiful girl turned out to be an evil skeezy witch who wanted to gobble up the farmer's son, which made the farmer's son

act out in some emotionally hurtful sexual ways he couldn't control. The farmer's son did make amends to anyone involved, except the witch. He can't talk to the witch, because she's evil and contagious with spiritual cancer. Yet here she is tonight, the skank, testing me, testing me. You want war, bitch? Let's do it. Your lame underdeveloped humanism is no match for my tower of higher power!"

Mandy rose, bolted up the narrow stairs toward the street. She could hear Adelaide scrape across the stone floor in her heels, but Mandy didn't look back.

She went home to vomit the wine.

The next night, after class, Cal stood in the corridor. He flicked his chin and she followed him out to the street. It felt like a music video.

Old movie posters hung on the walls of Cal's apartment. Old movie stars stared out over a leatherette couch, a television, a rack of videocassettes, a card table with a few chairs. Mandy didn't get the old-movie thing, but the pictures looked classy in their frames. Gold karate trophies obscured the half-dozen books on the lone shelf.

"Welcome to my humble abode," Cal said. He laughed, and Mandy decided that the word "abode" made it funny.

The wine Cal brought from the kitchen was cold and a little tart.

"Salud," Mandy said.

"L'chaim."

They talked about whether they were hungry and decided to order something later. Cal ripped open a bag of that smart popcorn.

"So," he said. "What do you feel like watching? Something sad, something funny? A drama?"

"How about something romantic?" Mandy said, but Cal pursed his lips in a fretful way, and she regretted it. "Or a thriller?"

"I've got something," he said, pushed a tape into the slot.

Almost immediately, Mandy recognized what he'd chosen. It was black-and-white, but it wasn't old. She'd dragged herself to see this film after it won every award. She thought it might help her understand her father, but she'd left the theatre after that sexy British actor kept shooting Jews from his balcony.

"I don't think so, Cal."

"What?"

"Not this. Let's watch something else."

"But this is the most important movie ever made. You can't even get this at the store. I have a friend who—"

"Please turn it off," Mandy said.

Cal paused it.

Any idiotic excuse could work. She just needed to get her jacket from the chair.

"It's heavy, I know," Cal said. "I've seen it dozens of times. I always cry."

"Why?"

"Why? How can you ask that, you of all people?"

"No, why have you seen it dozens of times?"

"So I can understand," Cal said.

Now he stood, clenched and unclenched his fists. His arm veins twitched.

"So I can understand and get well," Cal hissed.

Cal stared at Mandy, and she tried to get a read, as he might have put it.

Just a beating, or a bonus rape?

But then Cal relaxed, or, really, kind of deflated. His breathing slowed and he kneaded his hands.

"Man, I'm sorry."

"It's O.K." The jacket would be easy now. But how many bolts were there on the door?

"I need to tell you something."

"No, you don't," Mandy said. "It's all O.K."

"I do," Cal said. "Because there is something good between us, and I don't want to mess it up."

"Everything's fine."

"Six fucking million," Cal said. "How can it be fine?"

"Don't forget the Gypsies," Mandy said. "Millions of Gypsies. And gay guys. Union guys. Retarded people. Tons were killed."

"Six million Jews," Cal said.

"I know all about it. Is that what you wanted to tell me?"

"No," Cal said, and told her what he wanted to tell her. When he was done, he took off his shirt and showed her the tattoos, the swastikas and Iron Crosses, and even an ingenious Heydrich who Sieghelmed when Cal flexed his deltoid.

"But you said you had no choice in prison," Mandy said. "It was the Brotherhood or get the skiv."

"The shiv. But no, Mandy. I believed it all. I was hard core. Even before the Brotherhood. That's how I got to prison. I beat a guy almost to death. I thought he was a Jew. Turned out he was something else. Probably would have hated him anyway. Do you get it?"

"Get what?"

"What I'm trying to do."

"Not really."

"I'm confessing my sins. To you. I want to get better."

"Are you even attracted to me?"

"Not in a healthy sense," Cal said. "I mean, I definitely went out of my way to find the cutest girl at the J.C.C."

"I'd better go."

"Please, Mandy. Stay."

"No."

"I've got other movies," Cal sobbed.

Home, Mandy found a message on her machine from her father's attendant. It was garbled, because every message was garbled on this crappy old machine that Greg had stolen off a homeless guy's blanket and given to her with great ceremony on her birthday, but she thought she heard the words "mild" and "stroke." She'd have to wait until morning for a bus.

She called Adelaide.

"I knew you used," Adelaide said. "I could tell. What happened, honey?"

"I just had some wine."

"Just some wine? Who are you talking to, Mandy? Do you want to die?"

"Not tonight."

"Good girl. I'll have the car pick you up in the morning, take you to the soundstage. I've got a read-through, but after that we can hit a meeting. I have to say, I have a crazy week. You picked a fucked time to slip. But I've got your back."

"Thanks, Adelaide."

"Don't thank me too much. It'll go to my head and I might relapse!"

"My father had a stroke."

"Oh, Jesus, I'm sorry, sweetie."

"Maybe you could come out to the nursing home with me?"

"The one in New Jersey? Honey, you know I don't go out there unless someone has died. Is he going to die?"

"They said mild."

"Mild is the best. Don't worry, baby. Call me whenever. I'll try to call back. No fucking wine, Mandy. Don't be a victim."

"O.K."

"What kind of wine?"

"Chardonnay."

"I'm not envious at all," Adelaide said.

Her sponsor hung up before Mandy could tell her about the Pinot Blanc.

Tovah answered Mandy's call on the first ring, as though waiting years for this moment.

"Of course I'll come with you," she said. "In fact, I have a car."

"I don't mean to impose."

"I would be honored," Tovah said.

A poem cycle.

Like what some stuck-up clown would ride.

Tovah's Subaru had a dead battery. The garage guy offered to jump the car. He popped the hood, and they all leaned in for a better look at the massive corrosion, the split hoses, what the garage guy called a cracked block. Not that Tovah could have known. She never used her car, though she'd loaned it out often over the years.

"I'm still going with you," she said.

They didn't speak much during the bus ride. Tovah scribbled in her notebook, and Mandy studied the Hudson River and hated Tovah. They got off at the town plaza and bought some calzones.

When they reached the home, they found Jacob sitting up in his patio chair. Mandy had expected a weirdly folded

arm, a contorted jaw, maybe some slobber, but he looked fine. He waved off his calzone but gestured for Tovah to join him. The attendant pulled Mandy into a tiny dispensary to talk.

"So," Mandy said. "He seems pretty O.K. Pretty... mild."

"The doctor was here this morning. We're thinking now it wasn't a stroke at all."

"That's great."

"Yeah, well."

"Well what?"

"The doctor noticed some other things. Symptomatic things with the eyes and such. Your father described recent headaches."

"Headaches?"

"The doctor wants to run some tests."

"Tests for what?"

The attendant pointed to her temple, shrugged.

"What does that mean?" Mandy asked.

"Nobody knows anything. That's why we have tests."

Maybe if Mandy had tipped the attendant more, she would have divulged the ailment that would soon slaughter her father.

The attendant stepped out of the room, which was full of locked white cabinets. Greg would have known how to knock everything open, grab the goodies.

Tovah and Mandy's father hunched together at the table. Mandy joined them, tried to think of something nostalgic and uplifting to say until she realized she couldn't understand them at all. They were speaking in what sounded like German about something very serious, but also occasionally funny, and frightening and unendurable, judging by Tovah's face, which every so often froze like the faces of women in silent movies.

"You guys are getting on like gangbusters," Mandy interrupted. "Tovah, I had no idea you spoke German."

"It's Yiddish. My grandmother taught me."

"What are you guys talking about?"

"The Whatchamacallit," Jacob said.

He stared up at his daughter with that foul gleam. She'd never had a chance, really, could never have been the daughter, the destiny you claw through the blood and feces of enslavement, of death, to claim. She consoled herself with something she'd

read back in the days she still read about the Whatchamacallit, by the man who threw himself down the stairs. The good people died. Mostly only assholes made it out. That was how she remembered the passage, anyway. That was her read.

"You must know all these stories," Tovah said.

"Yes, I'm a child of a survivor. A survivor of a survivor."

Mandy smiled, stood.

"I need to check on some things. Are you two O.K. here for a while?"

"Oh, yes," Tovah said.

"Your father is amazing. I had no idea."

"Daddy?"

"How's your mother doing?" he said.

"She's dead, Dad.

Feel free to share your pain about it."

Jacob's cheeks drew in.

"You can't share pain," he said, laid his hand on Tovah's wrist. "This girl knows that. She's a poet."



It took hours to cross the towns—Nearmont, Eastern Valley, Rodney Heights—that led to Mandy's old house. All that cardio ballet and it still wiped her out, though she got her second wind and a floaty feeling in the bargain. Her friends the endorphins. She wanted to leap off a boat and swim with them.

Now she stood at the end of the driveway on Duffy Lane, a lost pilgrim in front of the pea-green split-level with beige trim. She ached for a certain sensation, a sudden click in the soul's alignment. God: the ultimate chiropractor. Closure, some called it in the meetings. The more churchy addicts referred to forgiveness, but she knew what people meant. She hungered for it.

Maybe if she just knocked on the door a beautiful Sri Lankan boy would answer, and she'd lean down and whisper her story.

"Is it closure you seek?" he'd say, in melodic English.

Inside, the father of the family would smile and take the mother's hand.

"You have made us happy by coming," he would say. "We have waited many years for this."

"Closure is not forgiveness," the mother would say, even more melodically than the child. "But you are a blessed one, for you shall enjoy both."

Then there would be an unexpected crunching sound, but actually that noise wasn't coming from Mandy's movie. An S.U.V. rolled into the gravel driveway. The doors opened and children scurried out in scout uniforms. A tired-looking woman with grocery bags followed.

"Can I help you?" she said.

Mandy thought she might be Brazilian. Or maybe Belgian.

"Look," the woman said, and pointed her chin down toward the Shell station. "If it's about the night club, I already signed the petition. I don't want them to build it any more than you do. Those drunks will crash into my living room.

But I'm really busy right now. I signed the petition. Take care."

Mandy nodded, and the woman turned to her stoop.

Her legs had gone rubbery, and the bus back to the city was in the other direction, but Mandy hiked on around a bend of firs. The Shell sign hovered, its colors dulled, a corner of it broken, or maybe bitten off. They'd shuttered the station, covered the pumps with dirty canvas hoods.

What the poor woman died for, Mandy thought, but then knew it was a rotten thought, too romantic, something for Tovah's poem cycle. The blazer, the tan, the lost dream of American entrepreneurship, her seduction and abandonment by transnational loins—these things hadn't killed her mother. Nor had her father, with his smeary, world-historical wound. What had murdered her was her mind, a madness factory full of blast furnaces and smokestacks. Mandy's mind had erected one, too, but Mandy would discover a way to raze it. She would grow a beautiful garden on the ashes of the factory, teach cardio ballet in more and more places, build a modest cardio-ballet empire. She would forgive Greg and help him however she could. She would help everybody. She would save herself.

The bus pulled into Port Authority, and she rode the subway uptown. Cal was waiting near the door of her building, and again they didn't speak but did their dance of nods and shrugs, and he followed her into the lobby, just as he must have followed her home some night to find out

where she lived. What was creepy to civilians was protocol for their kind. How else were you going to figure out where somebody lived, where the drugs were, or the money, or somebody to cling to long enough to forget the shame?

Inside the apartment, Cal pulled a bottle of wine from his coat, but Mandy shook her head, poured them glasses of water from the tap. They gulped them down and filled the glasses again and drank. Then Mandy led Cal into the bedroom and lit a lavender candle. Cal stood before her and stroked her hair with hands that had tried to kill a man, a Jew. Hate-crime hands, loving now.

He started to take off his shirt, but Mandy whispered, "No." He seemed to understand, even tugged his sleeves down to his wrists to better hide his tattoos. He pulled her to the bed and his body was smooth and taut through his shirt. Toward the end, he whispered something too muffled to make out, though she heard the words "beautiful" and "feels" and "so good," and then maybe "cabal."

The world was what it was, one day at a time. Mandy rocked Cal to sleep and thought about this day she'd had, this stranger in her bed. She thought about Pinot Blanc. She thought about all the colors of the key tags, about salmon and salmon-colored blazers and the cleaver on the kitchen's magnetic strip. Before she fell asleep, she yawned once and stretched her arm across the Panzer tank, invisible to her now, that in the morning would burst forth in loud hues from Cal's belly.

Tomorrow she'd look up tattoo removal. They were doing big things with lasers now. When Cal was just a little more stable, she'd break up with him, gently, and then she'd begin her project of helping everybody she could help, and after that she'd head out on a great long journey to absolutely nowhere and write a gorgeous poem cycle steeped in heavenly lavender-scented closure and also utter despair, a poem cycle you could also actually ride for its aerobic benefits, and she'd pedal that fucker straight across the face of the earth until at some point she'd coast right off the edge, whereupon she'd giggle and say, "Oh, shit." ♦

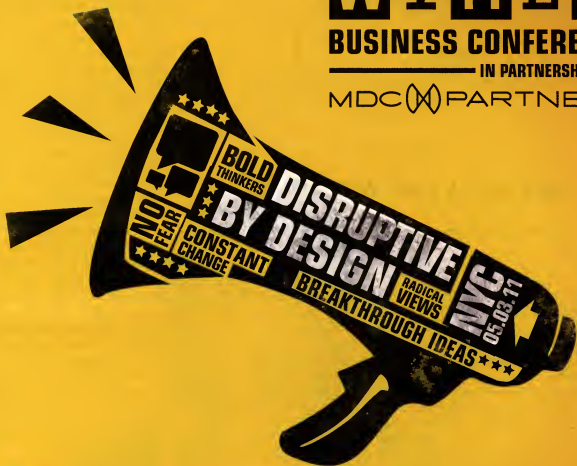
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Sam Lipsyte reads a Thomas McGuane story on the monthly fiction podcast.

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POP MUSIC

WORLD OF WONDER

How Merrill Garbus left the theatre and took the stage.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

In 2004, Merrill Garbus created an adaptation of Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" called "Fat Kid Opera," whose songs she composed on soprano ukulele. The piece was, in part, a commentary on the George W. Bush Presidency, and it featured a pantyhouse puppet called Fatilda. It was not a cash cow. "I realized I liked the songs I was singing more than the puppets on my hands," she told me. Garbus, who is thirty-two, left the theatre, but, several years later, found her way back onto the stage. She is now known to the world as tUnE-yArDs, at first a one-woman band, whose remarkable second album, "w h o k i l l," has just been released. (Garbus told me that her typographical oddities were initially a response to "the early days of posting music on MySpace—it was a way to get attention and make people hold down the shift key.") While Garbus's work began as sad songs written at night in her parents' house, it has turned into febrile, rhythmically fierce music that seems to come from a country whose name you struggle to remember. Is it the one next to Colombia? Somewhere south of Congo?

Garbus, a Connecticut native, eventually moved home from Vermont, where she had worked for the Sandglass Theatre, an ensemble company that combines puppetry and visual imagery. A friend gave her a Sony ICD-ST25 digital voice recorder, and her parents gave her a Dell laptop. She began recording melodies, lyrics, and noises,

making them into songs with a free version of the audio software Audacity. The nature of digital looping tools almost forced Garbus to become a musician centered on rhythm and patterns. With formal training only in singing, she needed to let the machines become her timekeepers and bandmates. But the portability of a small digital tool meant that she could turn any sound—a footfall, the crash of a wave—into the seed of a rhythm.

Early tUnE-yArDs recordings have been described as "lo-fi," but the songs that became her debut, "BiRd-BrAiNs," from 2009, are only intermittently noisy. The sound quality is mostly a product of where and how a song was recorded. Sometimes Garbus's smooth, powerful voice and her plucked ukulele parts are entirely clear, while an unknown object provides a fuzzy, clipped rhythm loop in the background.

"Hatari," the fourth song from that album, is a bit like a rickety, brightly painted bicycle weaving down the sidewalk. The ukulele makes a hunched melody that hops down a scale and ends on a quick ostinato. The drums are echoey and booming, like a marching band heard through a wall. Garbus alternates between yodelling, crooning, and a high, full-chested cry. Some of the lyrics are in Swahili (phrases that translate as "I can do it," "I don't know," and "I'm crazy like a banana"), a product of the time that Garbus spent as a college student studying abroad in Kenya, living with a family of Seventh-Day Adven-

tists and teaching music at a grade school. The yodelling, however, is from another part of Africa. "I thought I had an injury to my voice which caused me to yodel, essentially, when I was doing scales," Garbus said. "And in order to comfort me a friend gave me this CD of Aka Pygmy music, from the Central African Republic, in case that was all I could ever do again."

The syncretic quality of her music owes greatly to her experiences in Kenya. A story she told me encapsulates her musical approach. "For my independent study project, I wanted to study pirates, like Somali pirates who stole shit, but my advisers pointed me towards Taarab music. So I went to live in Lamu"—an island off the coast of East Africa—"and tracked down poets who wrote the mas-hairi poetry that Taarab is famous for, and took lessons with a harmonium player, Ali Hassan. I had brought my fiddle (my dad had been teaching me old-timey Appalachian fiddle towards the end of high school), so when he grew frustrated with my keyboard skills he encouraged me to play violin parts with his harmonium, and eventually I was invited to play a gig on the roof of a hotel with him and his band."

In 2008, she decided to make tUnE-yArDs a touring act. Onstage, tUnE-yArDs' divergent impulses begin to resolve. Garbus is a performer of genuine intensity, and the base of her music is only vaguely American. With the stalwart and quiet Nate Brenner behind her on bass, Garbus re-creates her songs by using a Boss RC-2 looping pedal, among other electronic toys. With a floor tom on her right, a snare drum on her left, and a ukulele at her chest, she builds each track from scratch, pounding, hollering, and playing like an exultant octopus. Sometimes she paints shapes on her face and mugs theatrically, but these gestures are superfluous—Garbus draws your attention even if you are hundreds of feet from the stage, sometimes simply by the raw volume of her voice.

The original title of "w h o k i l l" was "Women Who Kill," but out of deference to the sensibilities of her friends and parents she went with an impressionistic squinching of the words. No longer worried about MySpace, Garbus added the blank spaces between letters to

ABOVE: PHILIP WEBB/CK



Garbus's music sounds as if it comes from a country whose name you struggle to remember. Photograph by Elena Dorfman.

keep the sense of poetic chaos that "we get from texting and e-mailing all the time, when nothing is ever exactly right."

What is thrilling about "w h o k i l l" is that Garbus needs none of the fetishized authenticity of lower fidelity to charm anybody: she is a musician of startling range, and a better recording of her is simply better music. It isn't likely that there will be music this year that is more infused with the spirit of celebration and physical movement.

Several songs have lyrics that are specifically physical and carnal, such as the sinuous and slow "Powa": "Mirror, mirror on the wall/Can you see my face at all?/My man likes me from behind/tell the truth, I never mind." Garbus sneaks in references from all over—a tone that could be an ad-lib from a sixties soul song, a delicate whisper that sounds like one of her peers, maybe St. Vincent's Annie Clark. This music refuses any attempt to fix it in place. "Powa" also features one of the album's most arresting moments, a massed chorus of multiple tracks of Garbus's voice ascending together, in the distance, like the rising of a small moon.

On the album, Garbus hints at the problems of borrowing so much music from other places. "Gangsta" pulses to a hard, crackly drum track (perhaps digital, perhaps human—it's impossible to tell) and bass line. She arrays a chorus behind her, half clear and half distorted, striding the music into bands of light and dark. The lyrics perhaps address the challenges she faces as a musician, or maybe just as a person. She sings, "What's a girl to do if she'll never be a rasta/singing from her heart but she'll never be a rasta/if you move into her neighborhood she'll never make a sound." The song collapses into a series of musical potholes as a small horn section flies over the vocals, which eventually begin to break up, as if the entire thing were reaching you from a weak cell-phone signal. It's dizzying, complex, and heavy with the sense that marks the entire album: that of being right at the start of a significant stretch of work. Garbus explores her craft not like someone who is learning but like a talented athlete who is simply waiting for a longer track to run on, or maybe just an artist who needs room to unspool a gift that has been coiled inside from the start. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Crimean War, by Orlando Figes (*Metropolitan*; \$35). This engrossing history illuminates a conflict so dimly understood that, when it began, even the participants were unclear about its objectives. Figes is excellent on the complex buildup to the war, in which France and Britain sided with the Ottoman Empire in its clash against Russia over disputed territories and spheres of religious influence. As Lord Palmerston pithily said of Britain, "We went to war not so much to keep the Sultan and the Muslims in Turkey as to keep the Russians out of it." In a book densely packed with incident, Figes highlights the influence of the press and the brutal casualties that the war produced, devoting space to the Russian field surgeon Nikolai Pirogov, who pioneered successful methods of amputation. A description of the horrors of a Sevastopol hospital, quoted at length from the *Times* of London, could make a hardened war correspondent's blood run cold.

Heretics, by Jonathan Wright (*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*; \$28). In this chatty primer, Wright emphasizes the "extraordinarily creative role" that heresy has played in the evolution of Christianity by helping to "define, enliven, and complicate" it in dialectical fashion. Among the world's great religions, Christianity has been uniquely rich in dissent, Wright argues—especially in its early days, when there was so little agreement among its adherents that one critic compared them to a marsh full of frogs croaking in discord. This fractiousness, he suggests, springs both from the worldly power that Christians achieved, which insured that the line between orthodoxy and heresy was sharply policed, and from enduringly confusing elements of Christian doctrine, such as the issue of Jesus' dual nature as god and man. Wright, though

his prose is sometimes marred by creaky Oxbridge wit, navigates all the theological complications deftly.

The Tragedy of Arthur, by Arthur Phillips (*Random House*; \$26). Did Arthur Phillips's father, a convicted forger who was also named Arthur Phillips, discover, in the private library of an English manor house, a previously unknown early Shakespeare play called "The Tragedy of Arthur"? This is what Arthur Phillips the younger both suggests and frantically denies ("The play is bad. It is bad. Don't read it") in this exuberant chimera of a novel. Boldly, he includes the full five-act play itself, a virtuosic counterfeit, if something of a bore. The novel's real fun comes in the play's introduction, in which Phillips casts himself as a reluctant and self-deprecating memoirist exploring his relationships with his father and his twin sister, both ardent Shakespeareans. Phillips, ostensibly envious of their shared Shakespeare love and of Shakespeare himself, attempts, with sometimes dubious sincerity, to curb "our slavish love for this one writer." But his best trick is to balance a moving story of familial and romantic love on a deliberately unsteady fictional edifice.

From the Land of the Moon, by Milena Agus, translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein (*Europa*; \$15). This spare, fable-like novella tells the story of three generations of a Sardinian family, centering on an eccentric woman, referred to simply as "grandmother," who, in the years following the Second World War, pursues a brief but enthralling affair with a disfigured veteran before returning to her dutiful, passionless marriage and a "life of ashes after that one spark." Agus sketches her characters lightly, creating an impressionistic and mysterious narrative that probes the tension between imagination and madness and celebrates minor moments of beauty in an absurd and unfair world—one that prompts the grandmother to wonder "why God, when it comes to love, which is the principal thing, organizes things in such a ridiculous way."



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HEART:

Big. Beautiful. Kind.
Doesn't mind working overtime.

NAME:

Buddy

BACK:

Unbreakable.

TAIL:

Wags incessantly,
particularly when searching
for survivors.

EYES:

Very expressive.
Can look very sad, or very happy.
Trained to interpret non-verbal directions.

NOSE:

Trained to ignore all scents
but that of a live human being.

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Expressive. Urgent. And the most beautiful
sound in the world
If you're caught beneath the rubble.

PAWS:

Tough, but still get sore sometimes.
Can climb ladders
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Listens to every word you say.
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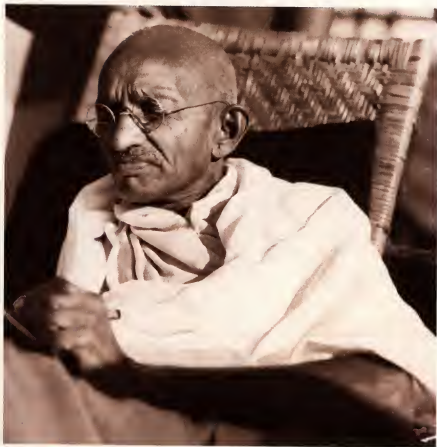
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THE INNER VOICE

Gandhi's real legacy.

BY PANKAJ MISHRA

*Gandhi's legend too often obscures the audacious radicalism of his ideas.*

Mohandas Gandhi was the twentieth century's most famous advocate of nonviolent politics. But was he also its most spectacular political failure? The possibility is usually overshadowed by his immense and immensely elastic appeal. Even Glenn Beck recently claimed to be a follower, and Gandhi's example has inspired many globally revered figures, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, and Aung San Suu Kyi. Gandhi, rather than Mark Zuckerberg, may have been the presiding deity of the Arab Spring, his techniques of resistance—nonviolent mass demonstrations orchestrated in the full glare of the world's media—fully absorbed by the demonstrators who prayed unflinchingly on Kasr al-Nil, in Cairo, as they

were assaulted by Hosni Mubarak's water cannons.

And yet the Indian leader failed to achieve his most important aims, and was widely disliked and resented during his lifetime. Gandhi was a "man of many causes," Joseph Lelyveld writes in "Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India" (Knopf; \$28.95). He wanted freedom not only from imperial rule but also from modern industrial society, whose ways Western imperialists had spread to the remotest corners of the globe. But he was "ultimately forced, like Lear, to see the limits of his ambition to remake his world."

How can one square such quasi-Shakespearean tragedy with Gandhi's enduring influence over a wide range of

political and social movements? Why does his example continue to accumulate moral power? There are some bracing answers in "The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi," edited by Judith M. Brown and Anthony Parel, a new collection of scholarly articles, examining particular aspects of Gandhi's life, ideas, and legacy (Cambridge; \$90). Still, Lelyveld relates the more compelling story of how a supremely well-intentioned man struggled, through five decades of activism, with a series of evasions, compromises, setbacks, and defeats.

As a young man in South Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century, Gandhi developed satyagraha, a mode of political activism based upon moral persuasion, while mobilizing South Africa's small Indian minority against racial discrimination. But the hierarchies of South Africa did not start to be dismantled until nearly a century later. After his return to India, in 1915, Gandhi sought to fight the social evil of untouchability in India, but Lelyveld shows that his attempts were of mostly symbolic import and were rebuffed even by the low-caste Hindus who were the presumed beneficiaries. Gandhi's advocacy of small-scale village industry and environmentally sustainable life styles was disregarded by his own disciple and political heir, Jawaharlal Nehru, who, as Prime Minister, made India conform to a conventional pattern of nation-building: rapid industrialization and urbanization, the prelude to India's ongoing, wholly un-Gandhian, and unsustainable attempt to transform 1.2 billion people into Western-style consumers. Lelyveld also shatters the attractive myth, burnished by Richard Attenborough's bio-pic, of the brave little man in a loincloth bringing down a mighty empire. As early as the mid-nineteenth-thirties, Gandhi had largely retired from politics, formally resigning from the Congress Party to devote himself to the social and spiritual renewal of India's villages. And by the time independence came, the British, exhausted by the Second World War, were desperate to get rid of their Indian possessions.

Their hasty retreat led to one of the twentieth century's greatest fiascos: the partition of British India, in August, 1947, into Hindu- and Muslim-majority states. The accompanying fratricide—it involved the murder and uprooting of

millions of Hindus and Muslims—condemned India and Pakistan to several destructive wars and a debilitating arms race. It was the cruellest blow to Gandhi. Liberation from colonial rule meant little to him if the liberated peoples did not embody a higher morality of justice and compassion. Appropriately, Gandhi's last major act was a hunger strike protesting the Indian government's attempt to deny Pakistan its due share of resources. By then, as Lelyveld writes, he was longing for death. Having refused all police protection, he was shot dead in January, 1948, by a Hindu patriot who feared that Gandhi's faith in such irrational things as individual conscience would prevent independent India from pursuing its national interest with full military vigor.

Gandhi's ideas were rooted in a wide experience of a freshly globalized world. Born in 1869 in a backwater Indian town, he came of age on a continent pathetically subject to the West, intellectually as well as materially. Europeans backed by garrisons and gunboats were free to transport millions of Asian laborers to far-off colonies (Indians to South Africa, Chinese to the Caribbean), to exact raw materials and commodities from Asian economies, and to flood local markets with their manufactured products. Europeans, convinced of their moral superiority, also sought to impose profound social and cultural reforms upon Asia. Even a liberal figure like John Stuart Mill assumed that Indians had to first grow up under British tutelage before they could absorb the good things—democracy, economic freedom, science—that the West had to offer. The result was widespread displacement: many Asians in their immemorial villages and market towns were forced to abandon a life defined by religion, family, and tradition amid rumors of powerful white men fervently reshaping the world, by means of compact and cohesive nation-states, the profit motive, and superior weaponry.

Dignity, even survival, for many uprooted Asians seemed to lie in careful imitation of their Western conquerors. Gandhi, brought out of his semirural setting and given a Western-style education, initially attempted to become more English than the English. He studied law in London and, on his return to India, in

1891, tried to set up first as a lawyer, then as a schoolteacher. But a series of racial humiliations during the following decade awakened him to his real position in the world. Moving to South Africa in 1893 to work for an Indian trading firm, he was exposed to the dramatic transformation wrought by the tools of Western modernity: printing presses, steamships, railways, and machine guns. In Africa and Asia, a large part of the world's population was being incorporated into, and made subject to the demands of, the international capitalist economy. Gandhi keenly registered the moral and psychological effects of this worldwide destruction of old ways and life styles and the ascendancy of Western cultural, political, and economic norms.

He was not alone. By the early twentieth century, modern Chinese and Muslim intellectuals were also turning away from Europe's universalist ideals of the Enlightenment, which they saw as a moral cover for unjust racial hierarchies, to seek strength and dignity in a revamped Confucianism and Islam. (These disenchanted Confucianists and Islamic modernists were later pushed aside by hard-line Communists and fundamentalists, respectively.) The terms of Gandhi's critique, however, were remarkably original. He set out his views in "Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule," a book written feverishly, in nine days, in November, 1909. Gandhi opposed those of his revolutionary Indian peers who—inspired by Marx, Herbert Spencer, Russian nihilists, and nationalists in Italy and Ireland—saw salvation in large-scale emulation of the West. Many of these were Hindu nationalists, intellectual ancestors of Gandhi's assassin, determined to unite India around a monolithic Hinduism. Gandhi saw that these nationalists would merely replace one set of deluded rulers in India with another: "English rule," as he termed it, "without the Englishman."

Gandhi's indictment of modern civilization went further. According to him, the industrial revolution, by turning human labor into a source of power, profit, and capital, had made economic prosperity the central goal of politics, enthroning machinery over men and relegating religion and ethics to irrelevance. As Gandhi saw it, Western political philosophy obediently validated the world

of industrial capitalism. If liberalism vindicated the preoccupation with economic growth at home, liberal imperialism abroad made British rule over India appear beneficial for Indians—a view many Indians themselves subscribed to. Europeans who saw civilization as their unique possession denigrated the traditional virtues of Indians—simplicity, patience, frugality, otherworldliness—as backwardness.

Gandhi never ceased trying to overturn these prejudices of Western modernity. He dressed as an Indian peasant and rejected all outward signs of being a modern intellectual or politician. True civilization, he insisted, was about moral self-knowledge and spiritual strength rather than bodily well-being, material comforts, or great art and architecture. He upheld the self-sufficient rural community over the heavily armed and centralized nation-state, cottage industries over big factories, and manual labor over machines. He also encouraged satyagrahis to feel empathy for their political opponents and to abjure violence against the British. For, whatever their claims to civilization, the British, too, were victims of the immemorial forces of human greed and violence that had received an unprecedented moral sanction in the political, scientific, and economic systems of the modern world. Satyagraha might awaken in them an awareness of the profound evil of industrial civilization.

Hostile interpretations of Gandhi's life stalked him throughout his life. Muslims accused him of being the harbinger of Hindu "Raj"; Hindu nationalists accused him of being insufficiently dedicated to their cause. Left-wing Indians suspected that he was cunningly preempting class conflict on behalf of India's big businessmen. Most of Gandhi's European interlocutors regarded him with fear and distaste; Winston Churchill wanted Gandhi to be "bound hand and foot at the gates of Delhi and then trampled on by an enormous elephant with the new Viceroy seated on its back." A confidential government report on Gandhi's years in South Africa declared that "the workings of his conscience . . . his ethical and intellectual attitude . . . baffles the ordinary processes of thought." The British press as well as the government routinely took this

disdainful view of India's leading anti-colonial campaigner.

Gandhi was not only the most prolific of modern thinkers—his “Collected Works” will run to a hundred volumes—but also the most globalized and ecumenical, and, a century later, it's still not easy to place him. His closest friends in South Africa were Jewish intellectuals from England and Germany. After trying vainly to turn himself into an English gentleman, he was initiated into Hindu philosophy by a Russian Theosophist. And he borrowed as much from the New Testament, Ruskin, Thoreau, G. K. Chesterton, and Tolstoy (the polemical Christian rather than the novelist) as from the Bhagavad Gita, whose affirmation of righteous war he reinterpreted as a parable of nonviolence.

Though known as a devout Hindu, Gandhi rarely visited temples, and was generally repelled by the rituals and customs of organized religion. He disclaimed all responsibility for what his followers and detractors called “Gandhism,” declaring that any ideological “ism” deserves to be destroyed.” Though he drew upon the language of modern anti-imperialism, he professed no faith in constitutional democracy, Communism, industrialization, or other forms of self-strengthening embraced by Indian and Asian anti-imperialists. He preferred, as his exasperated and articulate assassin put it, such “old superstitious beliefs” as the “power of the soul, the inner voice, the fast, the prayer and the purity of the mind.”

Gandhi's nonconformist ways tend to appall and alienate secular-minded observers. George Orwell confessed to an “aesthetic distaste” for his “anti-human and reactionary” aims. “Gandhi's teachings cannot be squared with the belief that Man is the measure of all things,” Orwell warned, correctly. In a recent review of Lelyveld's book, which describes Gandhi's intense friendship with a German Jewish man in South Africa, the right-wing British historian Andrew Roberts accused him of being a “sexual weirdo.” (Amplified by the British tabloid press, Roberts's review provoked a ban on the book in the Indian state of Gujarat last month.)

Roberts is not entirely wrong to allege that Gandhi was “a political incompetent, and a fanatical faddist.” Advising European Jews to practice nonviolent re-

DISMEMBERMENT

Your smile makes me think of Larry in “The Razor's Edge.”
Your voice is George singing “Got me escapin' from this zoo.”
Your eyes are a sculpture by Jesús Rafael Soto.

Your body reminds me of the boy who resembled a seaweed
in “2666.”

Your gaze recalls Su Li-zhen watching the man in “In the Mood for Love.”

When you drink coffee I think of myself drinking coffee.
The smoke of your cigarette is like that video of a plastic bag
in the wind.

I saw a hawk make an intention movement to fly
and seeing it instantly I saw also
the same jutting movement of the dancer's head
in Nacho Duato's “Por Vos Muero” set to Beyoncé's “Halo”
at the moment when she sings, “I got my angel now,”
at once hearing the sound of it,
and after a moment I thought of your name.

Your kisses could be that photograph of two couples and some
steam and two shadows by Joel Meyerowitz.

—Meredith Root-Bernstein

sistance against Hitler, he was guilty of a grotesque misunderstanding of the Third Reich. Many of his acts were deeply selfish: he did not consult his wife before imposing his vow of celibacy on her. Yet the British historian Judith Brown exaggerates only slightly when she claims, in her introduction to “The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi,” that “anyone who considers many of the fundamental issues of human life, its goals, its capacities, and the nature of men and women in public communities, issues of violence and cooperation, and of ends and means, will find that Gandhi has been there before, and struggled with them.”

Lelyveld, minutely tracking Gandhi's main journeys and detours through India and South Africa, rarely zooms out to a broader picture, one that would allow us to locate Gandhi in our own world. Gandhi's name, after all, is frequently and wistfully invoked in many conflict zones today; sometimes, the widely felt yearning for a Palestinian or Israeli Gandhi seems proof of the moral superiority of his nonviolent politics. He diagnosed many maladies of our interdependent world in ways that seem prescient. His ecological world view—summed up by his homily “Earth pro-

vides enough to satisfy every man's need but not for every man's greed”—and forays into organic farming no longer seem as eccentric as they did when hardly anyone had a private car and only a fraction of the world's population regularly ate meat. Petra Kelly, a co-founder and the first leader of Germany's increasingly powerful Green Party, credited Gandhi for the now commonplace belief that having an ecologically oriented society “reduces the risk that policies of violence will be pursued in our name.”

Gandhi's greatest contribution to the arsenal of political activism, however, is his theory and practice of bringing together great masses of highly motivated and disciplined protesters in public spaces. Here his spiritual beliefs were crucial: the assumption, in particular, that, regardless of the regime people lived under—democracy or dictatorship, capitalist or socialist—they always possessed a freedom of conscience, an inner capacity to make moral choices in everyday life. As his mass campaigns often proved, and the recent Arab uprisings have affirmed, such strongly self-aware individuals acting cooperatively in the spotlight of the world media could come to wield an astonishing amount of moral authority—the “authentic, enduring power” of peo-

ple that, as Hannah Arendt wrote in her analysis of the Prague Spring of 1968, a repressive regime or government could neither create nor suppress through the use of terror, and before which it must eventually surrender.

Gandhi did not see his own political activism as a means to a predetermined end, and exhorted his old Congress Party to dissolve itself after India's independence instead of becoming the new ruling class. Gandhi felt politics to be too important to be left to professional politicians, or to the technocrats and journalists who shape government policy and influence public opinion. Indeed, as the philosopher Akeel Bilgrami points out in a stimulating essay in "The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi," he recoiled from such instrumentalist categories of statecraft and politicking as "populations" and "citizenry." For him, working and bonding with other flesh-and-blood men and women was the most satisfying way of being in the world. As such, political and social activism was an end in itself.

Bilgrami describes Gandhi as a greater "anti-imperialist theorist" than Lenin and Frantz Fanon. This seems right. Unlike them, Gandhi didn't just single out Western imperialists, or blame capitalism's unquenchable thirst for new markets and resources for European expansionism in Asia and Africa. In his view, organized exploitation of people and resources was a feature of all industrial civilization; and he did not spare its eager imitators in Asia, such as Japan, and their obsession with achieving national strength at the expense of the weak. He could never have advocated or endorsed something like the Great Leap Forward—Mao's attempt to catch up with the industrialized West, which consumed between thirty and forty-five million lives. India, he was convinced, would be "a curse for other nations, a menace to the world," once it became industrialized.

Bilgrami shows how finely Gandhi integrated his religious beliefs and his political ones. According to him, Gandhi intuited that the triumph of a scientific world view over a religious one had "desacralized nature and made it prey without impunity to the most ruthlessly systematic extractive political economies—of mining, deforestation, plantation agriculture (what we now call agribusiness), and so on." Defining humanity

in terms of "gains and utilities," the modern outlook "could not see the world itself as containing anything that made moral or normative demands on one," and led East and West alike into a "cognitive enslavement." For Gandhi, genuine anti-imperialism lay in devising a mode of politics and economy that did not lead millions of Indians into the iron cage of a "decadent and utilitarian modernity."

The audacious radicalism of Gandhi's ideas is too often lost in the blandly universal reverence his name evokes. It's true that a lot of his arguments can seem like the ravings of a Luddite: his accusation, for instance, that modern lawyers and doctors make people more irresponsible and greedy. But they are not without a kernel of truth: a century later, we are more receptive to his idea that the profit motive makes lawyers divide rather than reconcile people, or that the lucrative business of modern medicine often treats symptoms while ignoring the real causes of disease.

Dwight Macdonald claimed to love Gandhi precisely because he lacked respect for "railroads, assembly-belt production and other knick-knacks of liberalistic Progress" and did not make speeches about democracy and Fascism. "He was the last political leader in the world who was a person, not a mask," Macdonald wrote in a tribute after Gandhi's assassination, "the last leader on a human scale." But Gandhi's refusal to endorse one or another of the many secular and rational ideologies of collective redemption (liberal capitalism, socialism, nationalism) also makes it difficult for us to enter his unique world view.

As a figure, the spiritually minded, sagelike thinker long ago faded from the mainstream of modern societies, together with religious faith, which used to prescribe ethical responsibilities and duties. Such traditional forms of authority have been displaced by ideologies, laws, and institutions, and the secular world views of science and commerce. It has been left to relatively marginal religious writers and philosophers such as Simone Weil, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Czeslaw Milosz to reckon with the difficulty of being moral men and women in complex, immoral societies. Gandhi, trying to devise a way of living ethically in the midst of the most violent century in his

tory, now seems the most distinguished figure in this countercultural tradition; and if some part of his message rings true it is because we share his anxieties about the public life of our societies, which seems possessed of an irrational momentum all its own.

States grow ever more machine-like, men are transformed into statistical choruses of voters, producers, patients, tourists or soldiers. In politics, good and evil, categories of the natural world and therefore obsolete remnants of the past, lose all absolute meaning; the sole method of politics is quantifiable success. Power is *a priori* innocent because it does not grow from a world in which words like guilt and innocence retain their meaning.

This could be Gandhi; it is actually Václav Havel, in his early essay "Politics and Conscience," describing the political consequences of the desacralized world—the loss of the human scale in Western democracies as well as in Communist dictatorships. Reflecting on the ideological standoffs of the Cold War, Havel was convinced that "a genuine, profound and lasting change for the better . . . can no longer result from the victory of any particular traditional conception." Instead, it would have to "derive from human existence, from the fundamental reconstitution of the position of people in the world, their relationships to themselves and each other, and to the universe."

This sounds like a very tall order. But it was what Gandhi set his sights on, pitting himself against every political and social trend of the past two hundred years. Defeat was ordained. Yet there were many moments of redemptive glory in his great struggle. Emerging in the early nineteen-thirties from one of Gandhi's most brilliantly choreographed campaigns, Jawaharlal Nehru confessed, "What the future will bring I know not, but . . . our prosaic existence has developed something of epic greatness in it." Many more people since then have known this exhilaration of effecting change through individual acts of courage and empathy. It is what young Egyptians and Tunisians feel today, and their Yemeni counterparts may experience tomorrow: the ever renewable power of cooperative action, which is a truer measure of Gandhi's legacy than his many failures. ♦

INSIDE STORY

Lonely men of the nineteenth century.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



Rooms with a View: The Open Window in the 19th Century," at the Metropolitan Museum, is a conscientious art-historical roundup that ascends, here and there, to poetry. It presents paintings and drawings by forty-two Northern European, chiefly German and Danish, artists who became smitten, in the period during and after the Napoleonic Wars, with views of interior spaces that center on windows. What was that about? The Met's press release for the show, which was curated by Sabine Rewald, hazards that "the motif's juxtaposition of the very close and the far away became a metaphor for unfulfilled longing." It's Romantic, in other words. That formula really avails for

only a few of these artists, however, including the greatest of them, Caspar David Friedrich. Friedrich, a German, inaugurated the Romantic window with two iconic sepia drawings, made in 1805-06, that afford glimpses of a boat-busy River Elbe from his studio, in Dresden. Except for them and a single Friedrich painting, "Woman at the Window" (1822), the show's interest is largely archival. Besides unduly flattering a lot of mediocre work, the imputation of longing—unfulfilled or otherwise—fails with the show's second-best painter, the Berlin realist Adolph Menzel. Menzel suffuses both the nearby and the distant with a warmth of fond feelings, expressed in a painterly virtuosity

that is as sociable, in its way, as the verbal flair of his contemporary Charles Dickens. Worse, the notion of longing reduces the complexity of Friedrich, whose dark genius I sometimes feel that I am about to understand, but then I don't. Grabbing at him by the obviousness of his mise en scène—typically, lone or paired figures transfixed by the moon, the sea, mountains, or plum-colored nothingness—leaves a viewer holding an empty garment, as the essential gist slips away.

Friedrich never stops seeming new. He was a champion, in art, of a generation of sophisticated and restless Europeans who found themselves adrift in suddenly rudderless societies. Alienated from the values of both the sclerotic aristocracy and the smothering bourgeoisie from which they arose, the young men were left to perceive the world through the lens of their loneliness. Thus Romanticism, the first distinctly modern movement and, it seems to me, the default setting of Western sensibilities ever since. It recurs whenever a vagabond soul, finding nothing to do, does something. If that sounds like Samuel Beckett, it's worth recalling that the playwright cited a painting by Friedrich, in which two figures contemplate the moon, as the inspiration for "Waiting for Godot." A painting of Friedrich by his friend Georg Friedrich Kersting, from 1811, nails the disposition. Friedrich, at work on a painting of a waterfall, inhabits a shadowy, naked room, with a casement window that is shuttered against everything but a swath of sky. Only something inside Friedrich's head accounts for his activity. Kersting ran with the scheme; the show includes a similarly composed picture, by him, of another painter, in cozier digs. In general use, the windowed room quickly devolved into a cliché—which, precisely as such, would come to serve no end of modernist painters. Think only of Matisse and Bonnard, who adopted it as a means for flattening backgrounds onto foregrounds, skipping the fuss with middle distances entailed by old-fashioned perspective.

The windows in the two Friedrich sepias ache with strange, and estranged, emotion. Though monochromatic, the drawings feel haunted by color, filtered and bleached to ghostliness in memory. Exquisitely modulated shadows frame bright jolts of river traffic under empty skies. It took the artist three years, in that room, before he rendered the view; and he

Georg Friedrich Kersting's "Caspar David Friedrich in His Studio" (1811).

soon installed shutters (seen in Kersting's picture) to block it out. Something painful about the drawings—a whiff of latent, even delicate, terror—suggests why. Again, it feels up-to-date. Friedrich proves that an experience of the capital—"S" Sublime—the idea of malign beauty, then in vogue—doesn't require a storm in the Alps. It needs only a sense of external reality that is not other to the self but, rather, otherizing. Variants of the effect abound in the arts of the past two centuries. It is cranked up to a steady state of panic in Kafka. It is becalmed but ubiquitous in Edward Hopper. Most of all, it has engaged innumerable photographers and filmmakers. Take Robert Frank's classic, devastating shot of gauzy curtains blowing in a window that overlooks a grimy mining town: the good news of beauty laced with the bad news of being stuck in Butte, Montana. Come to think of it, any camera might function as an inanimate avatar of Friedrich—analogue to a brain being invaded wholly, exclusive of thought, by the uncanniness of the not-one-self.

Friedrich was weird about women. He was a starchy bachelor before he finally married, at the age of forty-three. His painting in the show—small in size but monumental in impact—is a rare one he made of his young wife, Caroline Bommer. She is seen from behind in a dusky, greenish interior: hair done up, wearing a high-waisted dress that is described, with gorgeous economy, by a few fast strokes of turquoise, for the pleats in it, on a sketchy brownish ground. She faces out across the river, hazily tree-lined on its far bank under a powder-blue sky that is pierced by the abrupt vertical of a mast. The mast tilts a trifle to the right; Bommer's body leans, oddly, to the left, as if the floor under her were listing. You needn't be a vulgar Freudian to get a sexual nuance from her vulnerably lissome form in conjunction with the stiff mast. I remember another painting by Friedrich, in which two women, also with their backs turned, appear to steady each other while beholding a harbor scene forested with masts and distant Gothic spires. Friedrich seems unable to conceive of women except as complements of maleness, when not of actual men. But his kinks don't matter, artistically. What counts is that he didn't comb them out of his work in obeisance to some acculturated propriety. In a way very different

from that of his older contemporary Goya, but on a parallel trajectory, Friedrich responded to a historic breakdown of boundaries between the inner chaos of wants and fears and the outward order of manners and mores.

There are gems by other artists in the show, such as "View from the Artist's Window" (1825), painted by Martinus Rorbye, a Dane, at the age of twenty-two. There's no longing, but only brilliant satisfaction in his windowsill array of potted plants—hydrangea, amaranth, agave—backlit against boats at harbor. The "Golden Age" of Danish painting, which the work exemplifies, is far too little known in America. It was a fleeting efflorescence after the country's catastrophic loss of power and prosperity in 1807, when Lord Nelson obliterated its naval forces at Copenhagen. Many of the non-Danish painters in the show, including Friedrich, studied in Denmark, where Romanticism took an ecstatic, precisionist, light-intoxicated turn. In France, meanwhile, it was confidently show-offy, as evinced in theatrical coups by Léon Cogniet and Louise Adéone Drolling. In Russia, where Friedrich was especially popular, young men rattled around in rooms far too spacious for their needs, as in a painting by Count Fyodor Petrovich Tolstoy, a relative of Leo's. But nobody rivals Friedrich, whose singularity makes him a perennial renegade. He was out of fashion and all but forgotten when he died, in poverty, in 1840. Edvard Munch and the German Expressionists rediscovered him. Later, the Surrealists and then the existentialists seized on him as a tutelary hero. So did the Nazis. Guilt by association returned Friedrich to obscurity after the Second World War. I first learned of him from New York painters in the nineteen-seventies. What was that moody image, pinned to a studio wall? A Caspar David Friedrich. Then, in 1978, the great art historian Robert Rosenblum published "Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko," and the cult went public. But, still today, looking at a Friedrich can feel like a sideways stumble out of historical time, into a mental state that you may recognize against your will: hypersensitive, enrapt, and dire. ♦

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Peter Schjeldahl narrates a slide show.

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SHADOW AND ACT

Shakespeare without words.

BY HILTON ALS

Even though the shadowy, mannered, and morally terrible world that Alfred Hitchcock created as a young filmmaker in pre-Second World War Britain and Shakespeare's "Macbeth" provide some of the inspiration for "Sleep No More" (a Punchdrunk production, in collaboration with Emursive, at the McKittrick Hotel), the piece strongly evokes another master of the lens: the photographer Diane Arbus. Yet it isn't the Arbus of the famous portraits—a black-and-white universe peopled by the disenfranchised—that one thinks of while walking through this site-specific work but the Arbus who recorded what she found unobscured by people: a lonely room with a shimmering Christmas tree, the façade of a fake house in Hollywood, a Disneyland castle lit up at night—figments of the real world's imagination. While the act of viewing static photographs generally bears little immediate relationship to watching theatre, the most plastic of spectacles, the show's co-directors, Felix Barrett and Maxine Doyle (she also choreographed the piece), have created a work that isn't so much a montage as a series of separate images, some of them powerful, some not. And when the show doesn't work it's because the directors are leaning too heavily on Hitchcock's at times facile sleight of hand and less on Arbus's uncompromising seductiveness and power.

After checking in at the box office, where audience members are given a playing card, and leaving coats, sweaters, and bags in a coatroom that lines the dimly lit entrance hall, you climb a flight of stairs that leads to a black, curtained space.

There's an opening in the curtain; you enter and, within moments, you're shuffling through a maze. (The only light is projected onto the floor. But it's not a path that inspires confidence, since you have already entered an environment that you don't feel you can trust.) Will the curtains suffocate and swallow us up? Is there someone in the velvet darkness who will

*Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Punchdrunk's "Sleep No More."*

"get" us? Is there a trapdoor in the floor? We can't hold on to the music as any kind of comfort. The score is loud, constant, a timpani-heavy beat combined with other abrasive sounds. (The dreadful, perfect soundtrack here and throughout the show is by Stephen Dobbie, whose work often sounds the way the protagonist's agony reads in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart.") There is no one to help us. But then comes a measure of relief—if you can call it that. After we finally reach

the other side of the maze, we find ourselves in a lounge, which consists of a small bandstand, a bar, tables, sofas, chairs. But the atmosphere is from another era, with a host from another era, dressed in a tuxedo, with black, slicked-back hair, and an unctuous, controlling manner (Conor Doyle in this performance; the cast varies). He welcomes us to Manderley.

Like our host, the smoky, damask-heavy atmosphere comes straight out of the nineteen-thirties. (The brilliant set is by Barrett, Livi Vaughan, and Beatrice Minns. The equally noticeable costumes are by David Israel Reynoso.) Or are we in the nineteen-thirties? Was our journey through the black velvet actually some kind of time travel? Doyle speaks in a

plummy old-English-movie accent; he could well be the star of the sort of movie where bodies are found in the library and love and betrayal are expressed over a perfectly appointed dinner table. He directs us to the bar to purchase a drink, also telling us that, in short order, the cards we've been carrying will be called. You might be dreaming as you order a drink. You might be a dream yourself. Before you can settle in with your cocktail, though, your card is announced, and you move on to the next sequence of events, which forms the core of the performance. Standing in a dark vestibule in front of a lift, you're given a mask to wear, which brings to mind both the murderer in the "Scream" series and the party guests in Stanley Kubrick's "Eyes Wide Shut." A beautiful black woman (Teena Blain) with

long black hair, dressed in an evening gown and speaking with an exaggerated accent—every other word she utters, it seems, is "darling"; sometimes it sounds like a threat—tells us not to say a word; language would upset the other guests, or inmates. She implores us to hurry back if we must; she'll be lonely without us. She's lonely for the young man (John Sorensen-Jolink) who crowds us into a freight elevator, too. The chiaroscuro lighting in the lift only adds to the sense of dread and

foreboding as he cautions us never to remove our masks, and assures us that if we get confused while on any of the hotel's five floors that are open to us there are sentries in black who can help us. The elevator stops. We're discharged. There's the creak and whirr of the lift descending. Then silence.

Doors. Rooms filled with desks, old papers, stuffed animals, all dimly lit. We're on the verge of horror. But where is it? In our very imaginations? One of the rooms contains a number of beds with iron frames; clipboards with the inmates' psychological histories are attached. But where are the nurses, the doctors, who are meant to see these absent patients through their disease of the mind? Is the sight of a room filled with bathtubs, of a man washing garments in one and then placing them on another tub to dry, any more real than the vision we will soon have of characters based on Macbeth and Lady Macbeth (Eric Jackson Bradley and Tori Sparks) engaged in a silent physical exchange—a battle that looks sexual because it is—before he helps her dress and apply her lipstick for their shared battle of deceit and tragedy? Sparks has close-cropped hair and a square torso, while Jackson Bradley is long and lean, almost slight; he is at a mental disadvantage because she has the physical power. To see the various characters without masks—or wearing their characters' face—makes our masked faces look and feel more theatrical and fake than the performers'. Walking from level to level, the audience catches sight of other performers. A pregnant woman reaches for and then shuns the milk she's being offered. She's Lady Macduff. Turning a corner, we see Banquo. Again, the performers' movements—at times delicate and slow, like the tenderest of mimes; at other times fast and agitated—help bring out the tension that exists here between theatrical plasticity (the play's various actions) and pictorial stasis (its remarkable set). Indeed, the music further confuses us as it insinuates itself throughout this self-consciously "beautiful" work, which teeters on the edge of making us sick—by inducing a kind of emotional vertigo—before hiding behind its captivating, hard finish. The music belongs less to the dancers than to their backdrop. It wafts over, and settles into, the action, which feels as sour and inexplicable as

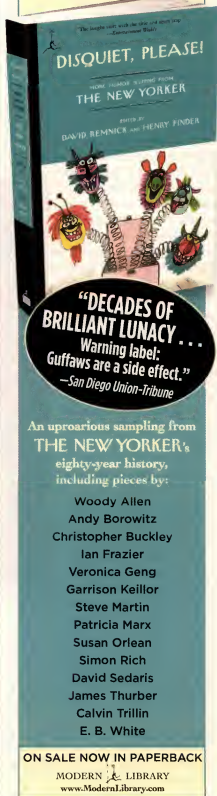
those bouts of insomnia when the world is stale and we can hear the blood coursing through our bad thoughts.

Of course, sleep and blood are the central metaphors of disturbance in Shakespeare's "Macbeth," but I didn't feel that the Bard was the central dramaturgical impulse here. I felt, as I walked to various levels in the cavernous space, and travelled through a moth-eaten Highlands hotel and alongside the stunted ramparts of a castle and among clumps of Christmas trees, or followed a distraught young woman whose costuming and attitude reminded me of the gesture-filled, lyrical, and cinematic self-exposure featured in the late Francesca Woodman's photographs, that Barrett and Doyle's primary impulse was to make theatre matter, to have an over-all emotional effect, in which décor and dance are equal to the dramaturgy, as in eighteenth-century operas.

Because language is abandoned outside the lounge, we're forced to imagine it, or to make narrative cohesion of events that are unfolding right before our eyes—or on the floor below, without us. We cannot connect with the characters through the thing that we share: language. We can only watch as the performers reduce theatre to its rudiments: bodies moving in space. As such, large chunks of the work belong to the world of dance, and ideas about repetition: the performers "act" their parts over and over in a three-hour time frame. Stripped of what we usually expect of a theatrical performance, we're drawn more and more to the panic that the piece incites, and the anxiety that keeps us moving from floor to floor and from room to room, like shuddering inmates. This spell is, unfortunately, broken if you return to the lounge to quiet down and gain perspective. The images that one has instilled with fright start to recede as the jazz combo and the singer take the stage, and the beautiful black woman walks and slowly dances among the assembled guests, who are perhaps contemplating the next round of cloak-and-dagger with their own souls. Does this mean that, if one forgets moments of the piece in this doomed party atmosphere, it's superficial? Yes. Does this mean that the profound role the piece plays in altering one's consciousness makes it a deep work, too? Yes. ♦

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*If laughter is the
best medicine,
Disquiet, Please!
is a wonder drug.*



IN THE DARK

"Cave of Forgotten Dreams" and "The Arbor."

BY ANTHONY LANE

The suspect is an unknown male, around six feet tall. He is dressed in winter clothes. He has weapons training and proven survival skills. He may well be armed, so approach with caution. There may be traces of paint on one palm. He can best be identified by a crooked little finger on his right hand. Age uncertain, but somewhere between twenty-eight thousand and thirty-five thousand years old.

That is the man we are left seeking, as the new Werner Herzog documentary, *"Cave of Forgotten Dreams,"* draws to a close. Over the credits, we see a handprint, made in a rust-red pigment, with that trademark kink on the final digit. It was stamped or slapped—just for the fun of it, one hopes—on a wall of the Chauvet-Pont d'Arc cave, in the Ardèche region of France. Nearby, the same painter has daubed a myriad of dots and blobs, as if recounting a bout of chicken pox; the British artist Damien Hirst once employed a similar technique, on canvas, to much less startling effect.

The cave, which features not just dots but wondrous depictions of animals, was found only in 1994, by a trio of speleologists: "one of the greatest discoveries in the history of human culture," Herzog tells us, subtly hedging his bets. He does not talk to the discoverers, though he does interview many of those who have since labored to conserve, and decipher, the purity and the mystery of the place. For thousands of years, it was sealed, and therefore kept fresh, by a rock slide that had corked up the entrance. Now it is once again locked and guarded, so that

only the experts—the priests of the temple—may enter. How, then, was Herzog ushered in? First, he has a string of dauntless documentaries to his credit, the most recent being *"Grizzly Man"* and *"Encounters at the End of the World."* Second, he was formally endorsed by the French Ministry of Culture. And, third, he is, in the best and



Werner Herzog directs a documentary on the Chauvet cave.

most quizzical sense of the word, nuts.

You can tell this because of the unerring way in which he searches out, or stumbles upon, his fellow-eccentrics. One of the first people with whom he discusses the cave turns out, under gentle prodding, to have been a circus performer before becoming an archeologist. "Doing what? A lion tamer?" Herzog asks, straying slightly from the point. Then, there is the "master perfumer,"

whom we see sniffing at rifts in the external rockface, like a limestone pervert, and the "experimental archeologist" by the name of Wulf, who is interviewed wearing reindeer skins. Best of all is the director of the Chauvet project, a Frenchman who looks and smiles like Einstein, and whose English pronunciation of the phrase "woolly rhino" will keep me cheered into the autumn of my days.

Herzog's voiceovers, likewise, have always been more entertaining, and more musical, than the soundtracks of most films. Something about the spit of consonants, the oddly rarefied vowels, the thrusting urgency of tone, and the majestically German ease with which he romps in abstract nouns makes him our leading magus of deadpan metaphysics. If any-

one else were to contemplate the dramatic valley of the Ardèche and announce, "It is as if the modern human soul had awakened here," we would snort in disbelief, but somehow, because this is Herzog speaking, we buy it. Yet even I, a practicing Herzogologist, faltered when the director turned to the fresco-like scenes of beasts—horses, bison, lions, and those darn rhinos—that cover the walls of the cave, and declared, in an explanation of his title, "These images are memories of long-forgotten dreams."

Yes, but. Is it also not conceivable that they are the record of a good day's hunting? Might our painter not have had some friends over, lit a few torches, handed out smoky bison snacks, and showed off the length of his horns? Herzog is so keen to batten onto the deep and the high that he neglects, now

and then, to level his gaze at the practical. We know that the Chauvet painters used swipes of charcoal, for instance, but what of the sfumato with which, many millennia before Leonardo, they shaded their lines into a rounded softness? How was that achieved—with the rubbing of a thumb, or a separate tool? A quick word with an art historian would have been useful, although Herzog, to be fair, goes into rightful raptures over another,

yet more astounding flourish: the stacking of figures, with the outline of one galloping horse layered behind another, and then another, to suggest the heated jostle of a herd. This compression of the primeval with the unprimitive may be too heady for the viewer to grasp, and the bewilderment doesn't stop there, because some of the quadrupeds are drawn as octopods—the blur of their legs hinting neatly, like a multiple exposure, at their uncatchable speed. “Almost a form of proto-cinema,” Herzog says, and what you hear in his voice is not so much awe as a rush of fellow-feeling.

There is no mistaking the cracks in “Cave of Forgotten Dreams.” We get a mid-film excursus into early fertility figurines, triggered by the one vaguely human shape depicted in the caves: a dripping, pendant rock on which, as Herzog points out, a bison “embraces the sex of a naked woman.” You instantly want to know more about the parties that artists threw in those days, but does one detail warrant a lengthy disquisition on comparable shapes unearthed in Swabia, four hundred miles away? The movie is most intense when it stays in France and stares, not least because the bulk of the meditation is in 3-D. Just as filmgoers were asking whether “Avatar” was a false dawn—so lacklustre has the deployment of three-dimensional space been in the past couple of years—the Germans have come to the rescue. (Up next is Wim Wenders’s documentary on the choreographer Pina Bausch.) The new film has a touch of that gray fuzz which still afflicts 3-D, but, from the opening shot, in which we follow a row of vines, in the Ardèche landscape, and then pull up and

away to an eagle’s-eye view, we know that we are in the talons of a capable, exhilarated man.

The Chauvet cave is a perfect candidate for such technology, because it stashes its secrets in a recess. The eye must travel not merely through the earth’s crust but backward in time, as well. Indeed, you could argue that Herzog has succeeded in making the world’s first movie in 4-D. Inside the silent chambers, we glide past thickets of wet stalactites, and the strange, culinary morphings of calcite: sheets of what appear to be ancient lasagna, draining where it hangs, and a bear’s skull so smothered by stony accretion that it looks less like “porcelain sculpture,” as Herzog proposes, and more like a bad accident with a cheese fondue. Above all, we return to the animals, which are sketched with gusto not on flat surfaces but on constant bumps and curves. The effect—perhaps, who knows, the original intention, under flickering flame light—is to ripple them into the illusion of perpetual motion. Thirty thousand years later, they haven’t stopped running. The hunt is still on.

Further innovation lurks in “The Arbor,” directed by Clio Barnard. The subject matter is coarse, distressing, and hostile: the life and the career of Andrea Dunbar, the British dramatist who died in 1990, at the age of twenty-nine. She was a prodigy of sorts, although without a trace of the dazzle that prodigies tend to attract. Her existence began and ended in Bradford, in Yorkshire, and her work barely strays from the abusive streets where she grew up, with characters as hard and as easily chipped as brick. When

she sent in her first play to a competition at the Royal Court, in London, she said that she had never set foot in a theatre.

Barnard’s film, as if nervous of being felled by the straightforward, sinewy thump of Dunbar’s writing, ducks and weaves in a series of sly approaches. We get snippets of documentaries about her; a clip from “Rita, Sue, and Bob, Too,” the loud and libidinous film that Alan Clarke directed, in 1987, with a script by Dunbar; excerpts from her plays, staged with minimal props in the open air, in her old neighborhood; and, most wrought of all, interviews with her relations, who don’t appear onscreen but are instead played—and their words lip-synched—by actors. This shuffling of reality and artistry is nimbly done, but it seems a trifle arch for the plainspoken Dunbar, who is heard declaring that, when you write, “you don’t lie.” The unexpected nub of the movie lies with her daughter Lorraine, who starts the film by recalling the time when she and her sister were almost burned to death while Dunbar, who had locked them in a bedroom, was busy writing down the hall. Nothing in the mother’s drama is as sad or calamitous as Lorraine’s own history, as she explains: “Frankly, I’d rather not been born if I knew what I were comin’ into.” We take it on trust that the legacy of creative souls outdoes any waste and ruin that they happen to leave in their wake. Isn’t the damage to others worth it, in the end? To which “The Arbor” says, Like hell it is. ♦

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Richard Brody blogs about the movies.

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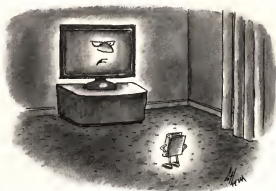
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Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Jack Ziegler, must be received by Sunday, May 1st. The finalists in the April 18th contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the May 16th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the U.S. or Canada (except Quebec) age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit newyorker.com/captioncontest.

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